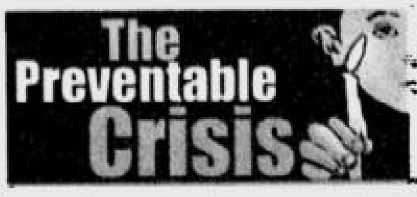


- **News / A2**

Bank documents of slain Army colonel sought

- **Entertainment / A26**

'Aviator,' 11; 'Million Dollar Baby,' 'Neverland' 7 Oscar nominations each

- **World / A9**

Over 300 pilgrims killed in India stampede, fire

- **BYLINE INQUIRER**

Mataas na presyo ng kuryente, inusisa!

Sino ang nanalo ng cellphone?
Manood ng InqTV ngayong gabi!

- **Today**

In **INQUIRER Libre:** Handa ka na ba? Ang pagbabalik ng mga brownout

In **InqTV** on ABC: Singil ng kuryente, dapat bang taasan? Stories and documents available at www. inq7.net/power

- **Tomorrow**

In the **INQUIRER**: The face of crisis

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, January 27, 2005 ★★★ 42 pages / 3 sections Vol. 20 No. 50 P18

Ex-AFP comptroller seals lips 21 times

By Carlito Pablo and Fe Zamora

LIKE his successor as comptroller of the Armed Forces, retired Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot yesterday kept a tight lip at the inquiry being conducted by the House committee on national defense on his unexplained wealth.

Ligot, who served as comptroller under then AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes from 1999 to 2001, cited his right against self-incrimination 21 times.

It was the first time Ligot appeared before the committee following reports that he and his immediate family had unexplained assets of at least P60 million, including two houses in California.

"I would like to invoke my constitutional right against self-incrimination" was Ligot's standard answer during the hearing. When plied with more questions, he said: "I will have the same response."

Appearing before the same committee on Oct. 18 last year, now retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, Ligot's successor, invoked the same right at least 20 times. Garcia has been charged with corruption before the Ombudsman and is undergoing court-martial for violations of the Articles of War.

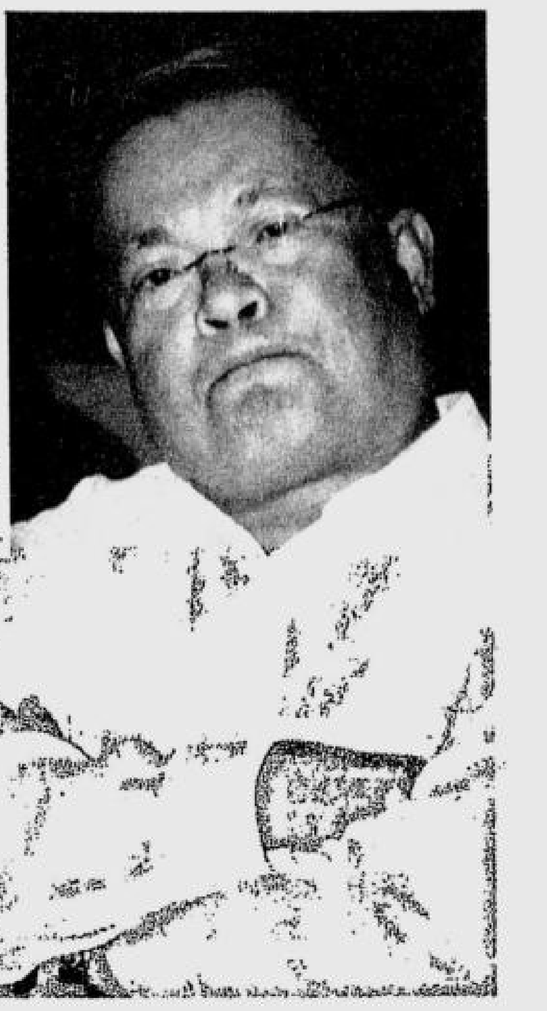
Retired from the AFP since August 2004, Ligot's neat haircut was the only visible clue that he had been in the military service all his professional life.

With his medium build, reading glasses and white *barong* Tagalog, he looked like a business executive if not a congressman.

Ligot arrived with his lawyer Antonio Zulueta, and indicated early on during the hearing that he would not be pushed around by the lawmakers.

He said he would answer the charges

EX-AFP/ A7



IT'S THE HOT seat for another former AFP comptroller, Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, at the hearing before the House national defense committee. He's the predecessor of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia who's on trial for unexplained wealth. JOAN BONDOC

3 CEOs join Arroyo team

RAPHAEL LOTILLA: From frying pan to fire

JUAN SANTOS: Beloved, trusted by businessmen

ALBERTO LINA: Driving force behind leading cargo forwarder

Who's Who: Management/marketing whiz, top lawyer, leading cargo handler

JUAN SANTOS

SINCE leaving the Nestlé chair's office in March 2004, Juan "Johnny" Santos has been widely touted as the best man to lead the Department of Trade and Industry.

A management and marketing whiz, Santos kept a seven-to-seven daily routine in his 30 years at Nestlé where he became the only Filipino member of the elite managers and marketing group of the Swiss food giant.

Santos steered Nestlé Philippines into becoming the global conglomerate's biggest market in Southeast Asia and No. 12 worldwide.

He came from a middle-class family but did not mind getting his hands dirty. He worked as a part-time gas boy for the defunct JD Transit while studying at the Ateneo and a busboy and pool cleaner while taking up graduate studies in the United States.

WHO'S WHO/ A8

Traders cheer appointments as sign fiscal reforms on track

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Abigail L. Ho

IN A MOVE to regain the confidence of investors, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday shook up her economic management team by recruiting two CEOs and a bureaucrat endorsed by big business.

After moving former SGV & Co. chair Cesar Purisima from the trade to the finance portfolio, the President announced her appointment of former Nestlé Philippines CEO Juan Santos as trade secretary and Fedex-Airfreight 2100 chair Alberto Lina as customs commissioner.

The President also appointed Raphael Lotilla, president of the state-owned Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm), as the new energy secretary. Psalm is tasked with privatizing the power plants and transmission facilities of cash-strapped National Power Corp. (Napocor).

Ms Arroyo prevailed upon Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Commissioner Guillermo Parayno to remain at his job.

Santos will assume the top post at the Department of Trade and Industry on Feb. 15 after Purisima takes the seat of retiring Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

Lotilla will take over after Energy Secretary Vince Perez's resignation takes effect on March 31.

Businessmen, who the President said she consulted before making her final choices, cheered the appointments.

"We believe the President took pains in choosing carefully her economic team and we agree with her choices," said Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce.

"Recruiting honest, competent and successful people from the private sector for the Cabinet serves our country well," said Ramon del Rosario Jr., chair of the Philippine-US Business Council.

"Santos is an outstanding

3 CEOs/ A8

Opposition walks out in bid to stop VAT express

By Carlito Pablo and Cynthia D. Balana

TWENTY-TWO opposition lawmakers, including six party-list group members, walked out last night during floor deliberations on the controversial bill providing for a 2-percent increase in the value-added tax (VAT).

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) said he and his colleagues decided to leave the session hall "in disgust," over the administration bloc's decision not to return the bill to the House ways and means committee.

The minority congressmen staged the walkout at about 10:30 p.m. after their motion to recommit the bill back to the ways and means committee was defeated by a vote.

"This action will heighten public awareness on the nature of the VAT increase and for the people to learn who really represents their interests in Congress, " Escudero said.

Based on the number of administration congressmen in attendance, the walkout was not going to affect the House quorum, but Escudero said the mi-

OPPOSITION/ A8

British Council: RP has too many universities

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE PHILIPPINES may be suffering from having too many colleges and universities, according to a study funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The study indicated that the Commission on Higher Education had failed to ensure quality of learning when it allowed hundreds of new colleges and universities to operate.

"There could be an oversupply in some areas," said Gill Westaway, executive director of the British Council which conducted the yearlong study.

"In a country like the Philippines, where resources are scarce, it's better to have fewer universities with quality rather than allowing hundreds of universities that are diluting the overall quality," Westaway said in an interview after briefing CHEd officials about the study's recommendations earlier this week.

According to CHEd records, there are 1,380 universities and colleges throughout the country, of which 1,214 are privately run, while 166 are either state-run or local government-run.

About 2.46 million students are enrolled in these schools.

Westaway said the study did not go into such details as which college courses and degrees were already on "oversupply."

Rather, she said, it focused on making recommendations to improve CHEd's effectiveness, including the adoption of a "new quality assurance system" when monitoring universities and colleges.

Jean Tayag, CHEd director for policy and planning, acknowledged that the commission had to improve its work on keeping

BRITISH/ A6

Video shows American hostage with gun to head

But where's Tarongoy?

BAGHDAD, Iraq—An American, who was kidnapped along with Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy last November, pleaded for his life in a videotape broadcast as political violence continued to plague the country five days before Sunday's crucial elections for a new National Assembly.

In the hostage video, a bearded Roy Hallums, 56, speaking with a rifle pointed at his head, said he had been taken by a "resistance group" because "I have worked with American forces."

He appealed to Arab leaders, including Libya's Moammar Gadhafi, to save his life.

Gunmen seized Hallums, along with Tarongoy and four others, at their compound in Baghdad's upscale Mansour district last Nov. 1. The four other hostages had been released by the kidnappers.

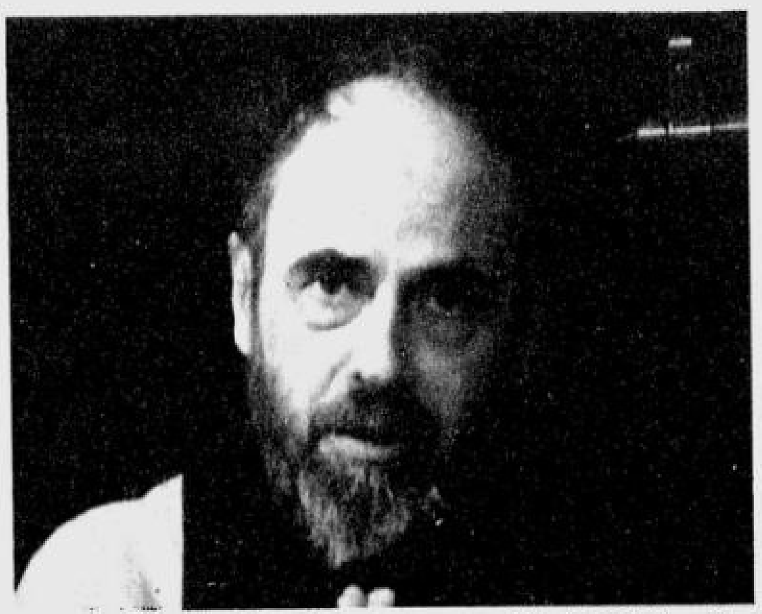
Hallums and Tarongoy worked for Saudi Arabian Trading and Contracting Company that does catering for the Iraqi military.

Tarongoy was not shown in the video and it was not known when the video was made.

In Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday voiced confidence that Tarongoy was still alive.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said that Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis and other

VIDEO/ A6



HOSTAGE abducted with Robert Tarongoy on Nov. 1, 2004, identifies himself as a US citizen named Roy Hallums and pleads with Arab leaders to spare his life on a 60-second insurgent video. REUTERS

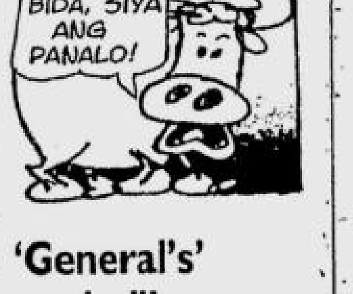
Congressman, gov, 21 others accused of graft

By Armand N. Nocum

A CONGRESSMAN and a number of other government officials have been accused of denuding the forests in Aurora province and of dipping into the local government share of the millions in taxes collected from forest products, mining, fishery and aquatic resources.

Named respondents in a graft complaint filed with the Office of the Ombudsman were Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, Quirino Gov. Pedro Bacani, former Budget Secretary Salvador Enriquez and 20 officials of the local government, Department of Environment and Natural Re-

CONGRESSMAN/ A6


SINO ANG BIDA, SIYA ANG PANALO!

'General's' son bullies Bunye's driver

By Juliet L. Javellana

AN ALTERCATION between Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's driver and a yuppie, who claimed to be a general's son, added to the Makati rush-hour morning traffic yesterday.

GENERAL'S/ A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over the Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/27/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Rains

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Officials seek bank info on slain colonel

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to submit the bank documents of former Army logistics chief Col. Raul Heredia, whose killing in December 2003 is believed to be linked to the corruption in the military.

A source privy to the case said the NBI recently submitted Heredia's passbooks to the Ombudsman. The passbooks showed that the Army colonel had approximately P14 million in deposits in his bank accounts at the time he was killed by unidentified gunmen.

On Dec. 23, 2004, Orlando Casimiro, the Deputy Ombudsman for Military and other Law Enforcement Offices, sent a letter to the NBI requesting the bank documents of Heredia.

The source said the Ombudsman may have asked for the bank documents in connection with its investigation of corruption in the military. At the time of Heredia's death, allegations of military corruption had not yet surfaced in the media.

Earlier, the Ombudsman also asked the NBI to furnish it with the documents and investigation report on Heredia's murder.

Two armed men shot Heredia on Dec. 23, 2003, as he was parking his car at his parents' house on V. Luciano Street, Project 4, Quezon City.

Heredia, 49, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (Class 1975), was an instructor at the National Defense College of the Philippines at Camp Aguinaldo.

According to the Central Police District which investigated the killing, Heredia was shot several times in the body with a 9-mm pistol at 6:45 a.m. The suspects reportedly fled on a motorcycle.

Heredia was rushed to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center but he died as he was undergoing treatment.

The killing has remained unsolved to this day.

The INQUIRER earlier reported that Heredia may have been killed because he allegedly failed to give other officers their share of the money from a "big contract." The same report also stated that Heredia, who had a monthly salary of P17,835, had allegedly amassed P14 million and had a resort in Laguna and properties in Baguio, Makati and Rizal.

Interest in Heredia's killing was revived after an Army general was found to have amassed millions of pesos in assets both in the US and in the Philippines despite his meager salary.

The Ombudsman is now investigating former Armed Forces comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who receives a salary of P19,000 a month. Garcia, who has been subjected to a court-martial, is detained at the AFP headquarters. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

The source also said yesterday that since the Ombudsman appears to be investigating Heredia's wealth, the NBI would start focusing on tracking down Heredia's killers.

Authorities described one of the gunmen as between 30 to 40 years old, 5'8" tall, medium-built with a dark complexion.

At the time of Heredia's killing, police said there were indications that the shooting was a case of mistaken identity.

CPD director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro had said then that the real target might have been Heredia's brother, Renato, who is a ranking police officer assigned in Camp Crame.

Sino firms asked to invest $7B in mining

THE PHILIPPINES has invited Chinese firms to consider a $7-billion investment in 23 projects in the mining sector ahead of the International Mining Conference in Manila next month, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Senior foreign officials from the Philippines and China met yesterday to discuss ways to boost bilateral relations and develop cooperation in economic trade, agriculture, politics and culture, among other things.

Foreign Undersecretary Sonia Brady, head of the Philippine delegation, said Manila expected more investments from Beijing in the mining sector following visits there by Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

"Strategic mining ventures will be mutually beneficial for the two economies," Brady said at the opening of the 14th Philippines-China Foreign Ministry Consultations at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

Last week, the departments of environment and trade inked separate agreements with the China Metallurgical Construction Group and the Ministry of Commerce, respectively, to facilitate coordination in mining matters.

The Chinese delegation was headed by Vice Minister Wu Dawei.

Chinese President Hu Jintao had expressed "strong interest" in the possible cooperation of Beijing and Manila in the mining of minerals such as copper, nickel and manganese, the DFA said.

During the consultations, both sides agreed to prepare the implementation of earlier agreements in the run-up to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the two countries' diplomatic relations in June.

These include discussing the construction of the Malolos-Clark leg of the NorthRail project, and preparing the implementation of the agreement on mutual visa exemptions for diplomatic and official passport holders, among others.

These were among the agreements hammered out during President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to China in September last year.

"New milestones were set during the state visit to maintain the dynamism of bilateral relations. As senior officials, part of our work is to ensure that new milestones are achieved to pave the way for the further deepening and broadening of our relations," Brady said in a statement.

TJ Burgonio

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MEMBERS of the Philippine medical team that assisted tsunami victims in Sri Lanka are happy to be home. They are set to undergo stress debriefing for any trauma they may have experienced while doing their humanitarian work. ROGER MARGALLO

Stress debriefing set for RP tsunami teams

By Blanche S. Rivera and Nikko Dizon

AFTER serving in the world's biggest disaster area, Filipino medical workers who returned from tsunami-struck Sri Lanka and Indonesia this week will be the ones receiving some medical attention.

Health Undersecretary Margarita Galon said the members of the two medical teams would undergo stress debriefing at the Department of Health in Manila today.

"It was a hard environment, according to them," Galon said in an interview yesterday.

"There were still bodies in the area being recovered every day, but they were able to deliver the services," she said.

The DOH will conduct psychological debriefing sessions to relieve the workers of whatever trauma or stress they may have experienced during the mission.

"It's a healthy process and it should be conducted, especially for (people doing) very stressful work," Galon said.

The undersecretary, who picked the members of the medical missions, received the Philippine delegation that arrived from Sri Lanka yesterday afternoon.

The 12-member team, the first Philippine medical mission to leave early this month, spent 20 days working at various evacuation camps in southern Sri Lanka.

The second medical mission, an 11-member team sent to Indonesia, was composed of public health workers. They arrived earlier in the week.

The country's third medical mission, bound for Indonesia, left for Jakarta yesterday. The group will be based in Banda Aceh, the area hardest hit by the tsunami in Indonesia.

The team is composed of 11 members, including general and orthopedic surgeons, an anesthesiologist, a pediatrician, an internist and nurses.

For the medical team that went to Sri Lanka, simple songs and dances became part of the children's healing, a team member said.

Nurse Venus Cariño said the "special" remedies were as potent as medicines for the children of Balapitiya town in the Galle region of Sri Lanka.

"In my very short interaction with them, I saw that there was acceptance in them. Their eyes showed happiness whenever we would sing and dance," said Cariño, a psychiatric nurse at the National Center for Mental Health.

Described as the worst catastrophe in history, the tsunamis killed more than 200,000 people, a third of them children.

Aside from Cariño, the team was made up of Dr. Romeo Bituin, Dr. Joseph Espinosa, Dr. Vilma de la Cruz, Dr. Luis Juan Arroyo, nurses Miguel Lao, Aida Cuadra, Mary Ivy Ocampo, Oliver Maat and Ruth Badia, and sanitary engineers Rodel Pineda and Joselito Riego de Dios.

Carino's task was to attend to more than 100 children, from toddlers to teenagers. Her teammates attended to the adults who sustained various injuries when the tsunami struck their coastal town.

In their 20-day stay, Cariño said she engaged the children in song and dance activities, teaching them Filipino nursery songs complete with actions. It was the same technique, Cariño said, that she applied when she attended to the young victims of Mt. Pinatubo in Zambales years ago.

Court rejects Meralco bid for rate hike, unbundling

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE COURT of Appeals has junked a petition of Manila Electric Co. to overturn its previous ruling that stopped the utility firm's 17-centavo per kilowatt-hour power rate hike and the unbundling of its rates.

The appellate court's 15th Division on Monday dismissed for "lack of merit" Meralco's motion for reconsideration of its July 22, 2004 decision, noting that the power firm had failed to show sufficient proof that the Commission on Audit had audited its books.

The CA said the Energy Regulatory Commission should have required the COA to review Meralco's books before approving its petition for a rate hike in June 2003. It also rejected ERC's petition to intervene in the case and have the court's ruling overturned.

In its 16-page resolution penned by Justice Martin Villarama Jr., the CA said the ERC failed to present a cogent reason to prove that there was actual and substantial compliance with the legal requirement for an audit.

"It fails to grasp the significance of the COA audit as extensively explained in our decision—the factual matters in dispute had not been satisfactorily resolved, as to the necessity, reasonableness and fairness of the rate adjustment sought by Meralco," the court said.

"This is not just a matter involving procedure, or the constitutional right of petitioners to due process, but the very mandate of the ERC which is to protect public interest above anything else. Otherwise, the entire process of rate-fixing becomes meaningless," it added.

In its July 2004 decision, the appellate court ruled that the ERC committed grave abuse of discretion when it refused to have the COA audit Meralco's books before it approved Meralco's petition for a rate hike.

But in their separate motions, Meralco and the ERC said that the COA had already audited the utility's books and that the COA even submitted its findings and comments.

However, the appellate court dismissed the supposed COA reports as only "initial and partial findings" and specifically relate only to Meralco's unbundling application.

It also noted that the ERC did not submit the COA findings to the court.

"Nothing in the initial and partial report showed relevance to the very issue of Meralco's true financial condition in both the rate increase and the rate unbundling charges applied for," the court said.

The appellate court also noted that the COA findings were never mentioned during the hearings for Meralco's application for a rate hike.

"The inevitable conclusion is that the ERC did not observe transparency and failed to act in the public interest, as even the (solicitor general) was unaware of any such report submitted by the COA, much less was such report taken up in the hearings," it added.

When the ERC approved Meralco's unbundling petition last year, the regulatory body also approved a rate hike of 17 centavos per kWh.

An unbundled electricity bill lists how much goes to generation, transmission, system loss, distribution, metering, supply, lifeline rate subsidy, interclass subsidy, Power Act reduction, currency exchange rate adjustment, franchise tax and universal charge.

Before unbundling began in the June 2003 billing cycle, the components of a typical electricity bill only included the basic charge, currency exchange rate adjustment, purchased power adjustment (PPA) and Power Act reduction.

In the unbundled bill, the PPA is no longer reflected as a single component. The PPA's system loss charge and franchise tax become major components of the unbundled electricity bill, while the cost of purchased power becomes part of generation and transmission charges.

Japan open to high-level talks on visas

By Cynthia D. Balana

TOKYO is open to a high-level dialogue with Manila on the Philippine proposal to have a transition period before the new visa rules for Filipino overseas performing artists (OPAs) are implemented by the Japanese government.

This according to the congressional mission sent by Speaker Jose de Venecia to Japan to lobby the government there in behalf of the OPAs. The mission was headed by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the House special committee on overseas workers affairs, and Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Roseller Barinaga, chair of the committee on labor and employment.

In his report to De Venecia, Lagman said Japanese officials were open to official talks between the two countries.

This glimmer of hope was relayed to the Filipino officials by Sen. Keishiro Fukushima, parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs and a member of the House of Councilors of the Japanese Diet.

Fukushima has invited Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon to a meeting this week for further talks on the matter.

Fukushima assured Lagman and Barinaga that the Japanese government had neither rejected nor accepted the Philippine request for a moratorium or transition period and that Japan's Ministry of Justice was still finalizing the ministerial ordinance that is expected to be implemented in March.

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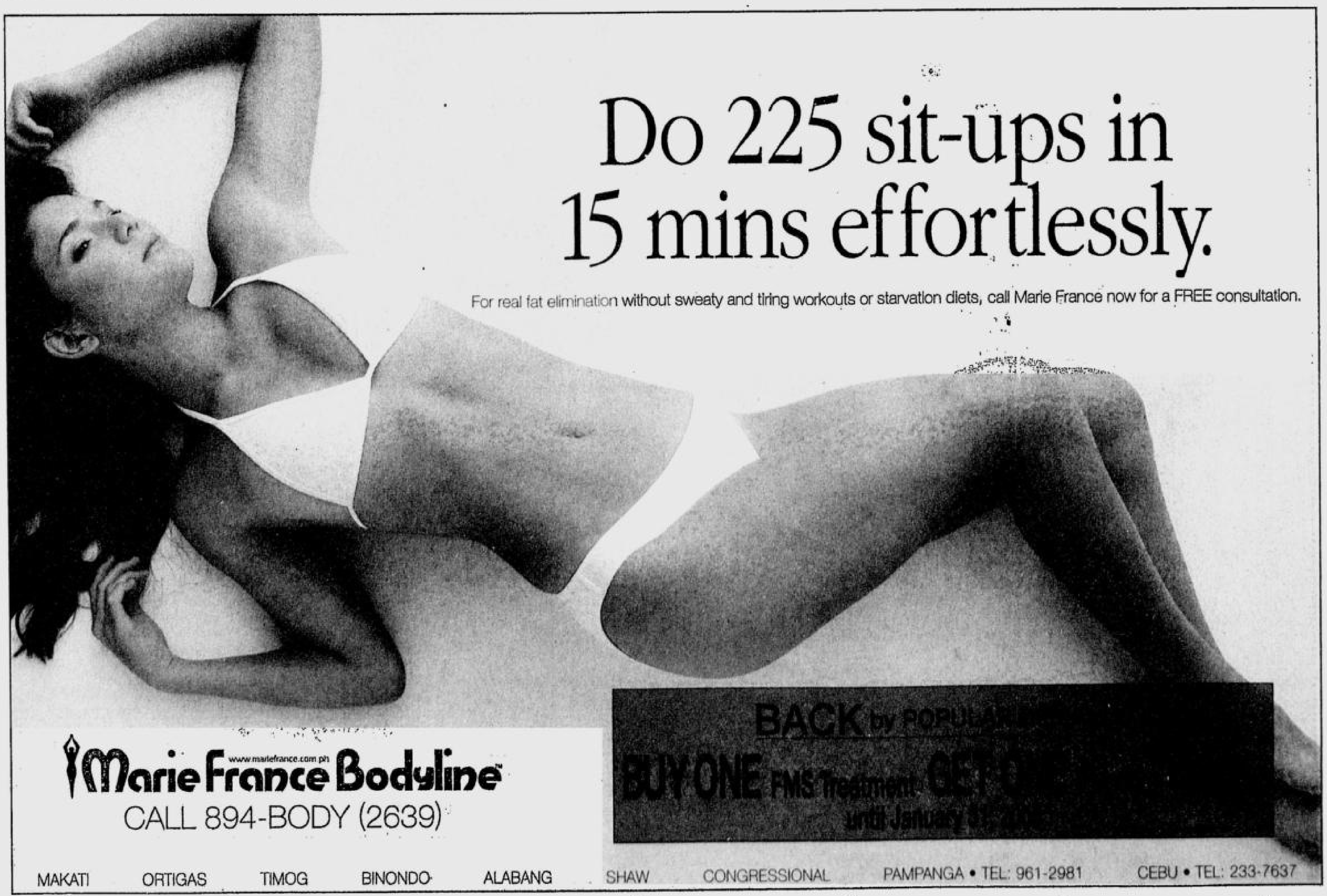
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World Economic Forum debates heat up in freezing Switzerland

By Isagani Yambot
Publisher

DAVOS, Switzerland—All told, it's a cool meeting tackling hot and tough issues in subzero weather in this ski resort town high up in the mountains.

Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom, president of the Group of 8, was to give a special address at the opening plenary of the World Economic Forum at the Congress Center at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday. Earlier in the afternoon, President Jacques Chirac of France was to deliver a special message.

The Forum, whose theme this year is "Taking Responsibility for Tough Choices," will discuss such controversial issues as China, Europe, Islam, the Middle East, climate change, equitable globalization, the global economy and global governance, poverty, US leadership, weapons of mass destruction and world trade.

The World Economic Forum is the foremost global community of business, political, intellectual and other leaders of society committed to improving the state of the world.

The Forum is not an ivory tower, academic discussion of the most important economic, political and social issues affecting the world. The recommendations of the Forum are translated to down-to-earth projects and initiatives.

Last year, the raft of initiatives ranged from projects to provide information technology programs for poor communities in various parts of the world to pledges for economic reform in the Arab world.

The Forum has set up two organizations to provide value to the business community and the wider society. These are the Centre for Strategic Insight and the Global Institute for Partnership and Governance.

The Centre devises dynamic and relevant content for the Forum's regional summits. The Global Institute promotes public-private partnerships to help address major international challenges like greenhouse gas emissions and IT literacy.

The Forum has also introduced a change program called Waves' which involves three stages or "waves" that focus sequentially on individuals, teams and the overall organization.

Last May, the Forum created the Forum of Young Global Leaders that will bring together 1,111 men and women who have shown commitment to improving the state of the world.

At this year's meeting, a parallel conference of the Media Leaders Community is discussing such topics as the security and safety of journalists, public trust and the media, the drive to the bottom line and digital technology and the new media.

Media luminaries like Richard M. Smith, chair and editor-in-chief of Newsweek; Bertrand Eveno, chair of Agence France Presse, and Eason Jordan, chief news executive of the CNN News Group, are among the discussants. The Asia News Network is represented in the Media Leaders Community by the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Nation Multimedia Plc of Thailand.

The Forum itself is being attended by about 2,500 participants from the economic, political, social and academic sectors from some 80 countries. Among the more prominent celebrities in attendance, aside from Chirac and Blair, are President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, former US President Bill Clinton, Bill Gates of Microsoft, actor Richard Gere, president of Gere Foundation, and musician Bono of the United Kingdom.

To emphasize the down-to-earth, sleeves-rolled-up approach to world issues and concerns, neckties are forbidden at the sessions and participants are encouraged to wear sweaters and jackets instead of suits. About the only black-tie event is the Gala Soiree on Saturday that will feature "The Best of the Bolshoi" gala performance.

Although there is a bus shuttle service, many of the participants trudge through the sludge and snow to the discussion sites in hydro-shield rubber boots and mountaineering shoes bundled up in thermal wear, sweaters, overcoats, ski bonnets, earmuffs and mufflers.

The entire town and the mountains are blanketed in snow; snow continually falls on the pine and fir trees. For people from the tropics like the ANN editors and publishers, a walk of 100 meters in freezing temperatures in the bleak gray and white landscape seems like a hundred kilometers. But once inside the session halls, the discussions can become so heated that once in a while, the windows have to be opened to let the wintry winds come in to cool down the debate.

Officials snub foreign journalists probing local media killings

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—They came but there was no one to talk to.

Gerard Noonan, senior writer of Australia's The Sydney Morning Herald and head of the fact-finding and safety mission organized by the International Federation of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, expressed dismay that some of the officials they were supposed to meet with were a no-show.

The delegates from IFJ and NUJP had hoped to get first-hand information from the prosecution, police, witnesses and relatives of a broadcaster killed last year on the status of the case.

"We traveled all the way from Australia just to meet with these people but they didn't show up. We felt isolated," said Noonan, who along with other delegates, is doing the rounds of the country to look into the media killings.

Noonan, together with Carlos Conde, NUJP secretary general, and Diosa Labiste, member of the NUJP board, arrived here Tuesday on the first leg of the fact-finding and safety mission.

They were scheduled to meet with local authorities, relatives of slain radioman Ely Binoya, witnesses, prosecutors and local NUJP officials. Only Grace, the wife of Binoya, showed up at the meeting.

Prosecutor Andres Lorenzo, who is handling the Binoya murder case, had told them in advance that he could not make it because of a scheduled hearing that afternoon.

Salvador Ramos, liaison officer of the Department of Justice for the Socssargen area, was in Davao to follow up on the documents needed in putting the three vital witnesses in the Binoya case under the government's witness protection program.

The city police director, Supt. Willie Dangane, at first committed to attend but backed out at the last minute because he reportedly had an emergency operation.

Noonan also decried the poor state of the prosecution and judicial process in the country, which he said was one of the reasons none of the 55 cases of media killings recorded since 1986 had ever been solved.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 27, 2005
3rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 10:19-25
Gospel: Mark 4:21-25

Jesus said to the crowds, "When the light comes, is it to be put under a tub or a bed? Surely it is put on a lampstand. Whatever is hidden will be disclosed, and whatever is kept secret will be brought to light. Listen then, if you have ears!"

And he also said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear. In the measure you give, so shall you receive and still more will be given to you. For to the one who produces something, more will be given, and from him who does not produce anything, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Commentary

Jesus begins to use images to describe what his disciples are to be in the world. Lampstands that disclose whatever is hidden, that uncovers what is not noticed. And we are warned that the measure we use for our dealings with others will be the same used by our God in measuring our value and reward. We are questioned if what we do and how we do it is for the kingdom of God or for ourselves?

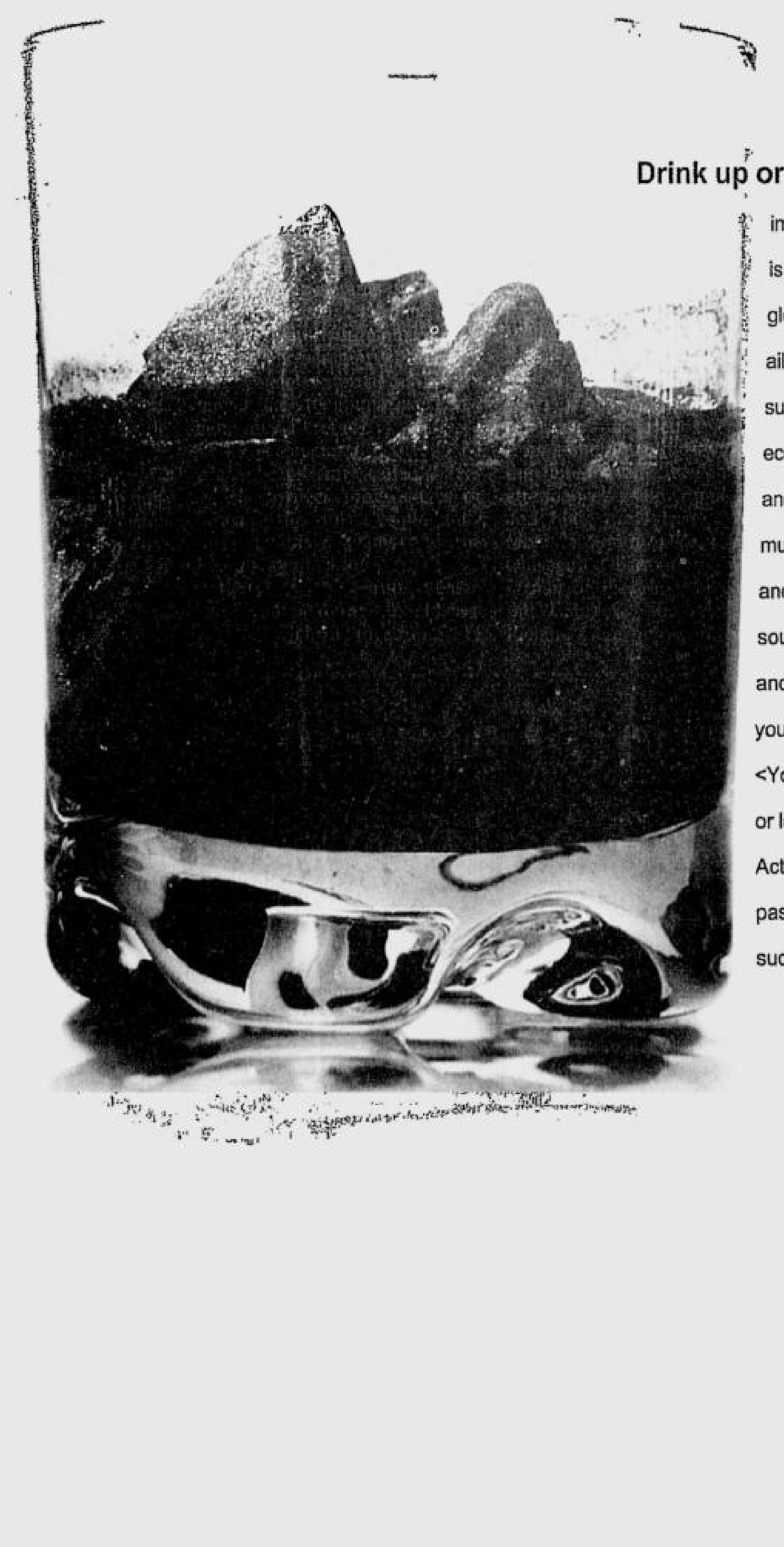
Angela Merici and her companions, the Ursulines set about bringing light into the world by teaching and caring for young women and girls, giving them a place in the world, a way to develop their skills and to live with dignity and hope. Who are the people today who need this kind of lamp, this kind of protection and help to make their way in the world? Will we be remembered for making others aware of these people?

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Forum-shopping—Forum-shopping refers to the act of availing oneself of several judicial remedies in different courts, either simultaneously or successively, substantially founded on the same transaction and identical material facts and circumstances, raising basically the like issues either pending in, or already resolved by, some other court. It has been characterized as an act of malpractice that is prohibited and condemned as trifling with the courts and abusing their processes. It constitutes improper conduct which tends to degrade the administration of justice. It has also been described as deplorable because it adds to the congestion of the heavily burdened dockets of the courts. The test in determining the presence of this pernicious practice is whether in the two or more cases pending, there is identity of: (a) parties; (b) rights or causes of action; and (c) reliefs sought. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Hydro Resources Contractors Corporation vs National Irrigation Administration, G. R. No. 160215, November 10, 2004]

By R. B. Vera



Drink up or speak up. Our continued reliance on imported fossil fuels like coal and oil for energy is one of the largest reasons behind problems like global warming, air pollution, the rise in respiratory ailments, and the worsening condition of our water supplies. This dependence also leaves us economically vulnerable to the spiralling cost of coal and oil in the world market. And things will only get murkier unless we reduce our use of coal and oil and push for the increased use of renewable energy sources like geothermal, wind, biomass, hydro, and solar. Speak up and let the government know you want clean energy. Text WWF YES <Your Name> to 2366 for Globe (P2.50/text) or log on to www.powerswitch.org.ph/vote. Act now and help get the Renewable Energy Bill passed into law. Maybe then, the future won't be such a hard thing to swallow.

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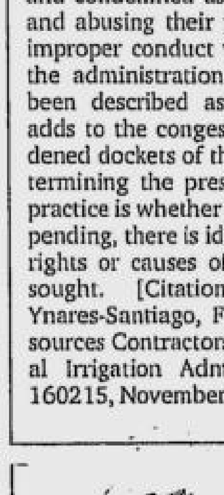

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Aglipay seen as nat'l security adviser

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHERE will the country's top cop go after he retires on March 13?

Talk is rife that Director General Edgar Aglipay will replace his predecessor in the Philippine National Police, Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., as national security adviser.

"That's the information that we've been getting and there might be some truth to that," said a senior police official who requested anonymity.

The position would be available if Ebdane moves over to the Department of Public Works and Highways, another official said.

An engineer, Ebdane had been considered as Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez's replacement even before he stepped down as PNP chief in August 2004.

Aglipay, however, said yesterday he had not heard of the offer, but he was ostensibly open to a government post.

"The blood that runs through my veins is the blood of ancestors who had died in the service of the country," he told reporters, citing his grandfather Gregorio Aglipay, the founder of the Philippine Aglipayan Church.

"I'll be willing to serve in whatever capacity, preferably in a position where I can greatly help based on my experience," he said.

There have been suggestions Aglipay would fit in at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency. Not a few PNP officials agreed he would be ideal to head the PDEA, the leading government agency fighting drug traffickers.

Aglipay had headed the PNP's anti-illegal drugs task force, a PDEA support group that was actually behind most of the successful antidrug operations in the past two years.

There also appears to be another option for the 56-year-old Aglipay.

One of his "mistahs" (classmates) in Philippine Military Academy Class '71 said he was planning to run for governor of Cagayan, his home province.

"He wants the post but the problem is the Enriles," he told the INQUIRER, referring to Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and his family who control the politics in the province.

The Association of Generals and Flag Officers (Agfo) has lauded Aglipay for the PNP's handling of the arrival of former President Joseph Estrada from Hong Kong where he underwent knee surgery last month.

In a resolution, the Agfo board headed by Brig. Gen. Jose C. Bello said Aglipay and the PNP accomplished the mission of securing Estrada and prevented any untoward incident that may have contributed to the destabilization of the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, meanwhile, has approved the promotion to full colonel of 32 police officials, bringing to 469 the total number of senior superintendents in the PNP.

The rank is one away from one-star general or chief superintendent.

The 32 senior superintendents took their oaths at Camp Crame yesterday.

Leading the pack was Senior Supt. Alexander Ignacio, a member of PMA Class '83 who heads the PNP service store, a Camp Crame-based grocery exclusively for police officers.

A SENATE employee points to the bullet hole in Buchoy's head said to have been put there by policeman assigned to guard the Senate premises. JESS YUSON

It's open season on dogs at Senate

By Christine O. Avendaño

THEY shoot dogs at the Senate, don't they?

A mongrel or *askal* (street dog) miraculously survived after being shot on the top of its head early this month on the Senate grounds.

According to a Senate employee, who do not wished to be identified, the dog named Butchoy was shot and wounded by a member of the 32nd Co. of the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police.

The SAF unit secures the Senate premises in Pasay City.

Butchoy, a year-old mongrel, was one of the dogs being cared for by Senate motor pool employees.

According to the source, the dog was shot at around 9 p.m. on Jan. 8.

A motor pool employee heard a shot ring out and soon after Butchoy limped back to the area whimpering.

The source said the employees discovered that Butchoy had a bullet wound in the head. In the next three days, the dog's face swelled and everyone thought it was going to die.

But Butchoy miraculously survived, according to the source.

The bullet, however, remains lodged in its head.

"Butchoy is so frail now but at least he has not lost his appetite," the source told the INQUIRER.

The source said an SAF member had shot Butchoy using a .22-cal. pistol.

He said another dog was recently shot and killed by an SAF member with the canine ending up as "pulutan," the source said.

The assistant to the Senate sergeant-at-arms, Col. Rasmia Aida Saber, said she was investigating the incident but denied that a dog had been recently shot and killed on the premises.

Saber said the Senate sergeant-at-arms in August last year asked the SAF to ensure that no dogs loitered around the Senate premises.

Cops probe missing Pinoy's phone calls

By TJ Burgonio

SAUDI Arabian police are investigating the calls made by a missing Filipino technician to get a lead on his whereabouts, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said the other day.

Suelito Leong was reported missing since Jan. 11 when he went to pick up plane tickets about 40 km from the office of his employer, telecommunications company Detecon Al Saudia Ltd., in Riyadh.

Romulo said police officers handling the case were looking into the calls made and received by the 40-year-old Leong before his disappearance since "these may help in the investigation."

Bahnarim Guinomla, the Philippine ambassador to Saudi Arabia, dispatched an embassy staffer to interview Leong's Filipino coworkers to ask about his "background and actions" that may help police locate him, Romulo said.

The embassy has also inquired about Leong with the Riyadh Narcotics Police, Romulo said.

"The police are on the job; we are cooperating with them," he said at a press briefing. "The embassy is awaiting any information from the police authorities regarding the whereabouts of Mr. Leong."

The Department of Foreign Affairs has squelched speculation Leong had been abducted.

Leong's wife Amalia, had sought the help of the government in locating her husband who, she said, had not communicated with her since Jan. 11. The couple, who live in Digos, Davao del Sur, have a daughter in nursing school.

The technician's employers could also not tell much about the case, except that Leong reported for work on Jan. 11 and hurriedly left the warehouse premises using his company-issued car after reportedly receiving a call on his cell phone.

"We should avoid speculating at this point because nobody knows yet what really happened to him; it's not yet confirmed that he'd been abducted," said Undersecretary Manuel Imson of the Department of Labor and Employment whose officials at the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad were also looking into Leong's disappearance. *With Jerome Aning*

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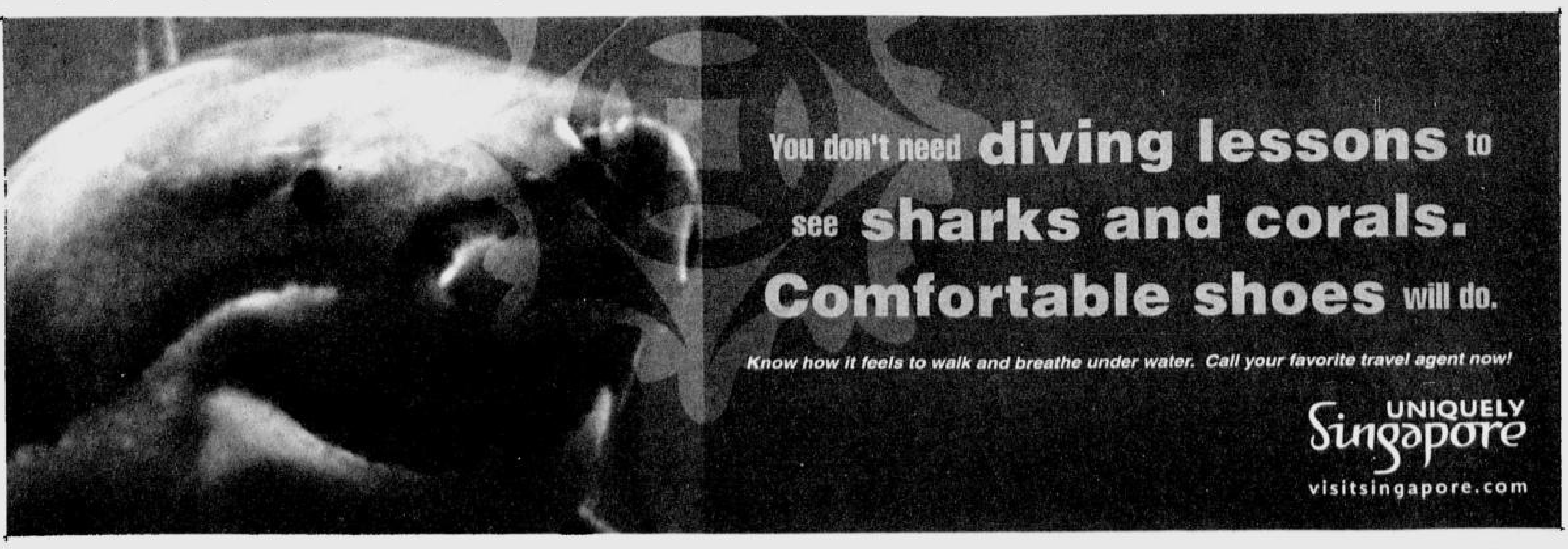

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Video shows American hostage with gun to head

From page A1

members of a lean team manning the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad had "credible information" that the 31-year-old Tarongoy was alive.

"We don't need a video [to prove that Tarongoy is alive]. Secretary (Alberto) Romulo has said that Team Iraq is highly confident that he's alive," Asuque told reporters, but declined to give specifics.

The kidnappers had demanded $10 million for Tarongoy's release, but Manila ruled out paying any ransom. Still, the Philippine government said Saudi Arabian Trading and Contracting Company should address the issue.

The DFA is hoping that a successful holding of the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq would pave the way for Tarongoy's release.

"I hope that once elections are held, the climate will be more favorable to the rehabilitation and reconstruction [of Iraq], and therefore, I hope part of that would be the safe and immediate release of all those in captivity," Romulo said.

Pleading

"I am please asking for help because my life is in danger because it's been proved I worked for American forces," Hallums said.

In Westminster, California, Hallums' daughter, Carrie Cooper, 29, said she last saw her father at a family reunion last June.

"My heart's broken to see my dad with a gun to his head . . . He's fearless and he wanted to help the people there and rebuild Iraq," she told KNBC-TV.

Hallums' former wife, Susan Hallums, urged US President George W. Bush to help her ex-husband and urged the kidnappers to let him go.

"Please release him. He's never hurt anybody in his life. He's only done good things. He's a wonderful father and grandfather, and he's kind and I know that you can see that he's kind," she said at her home in Corona, California. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

Low registration for Iraq polls

TUESDAY was the last day for Iraqis living outside the country to register for the weekend vote, and international organizers said less than 25 percent of those eligible had done so. The biggest turnout was among Iraqis living in Iran—more than 53,000.

Iraqi authorities blamed the low turnout on several factors, including the long distances that many had to travel in countries like the United States and Australia.

But Majeed al-Gaood, a member of National Front of the Iraqi Intellectuals, a Sunni Arab opposition group, said many chose not to register because of the country's continuing instability and the presence of US troops.

"How can we expect Iraqis to take part in the elections while their country is under the control of foreign forces?" he said.

An Internet posting in the name of one insurgent group, the Islamic Army of Iraq, ordered followers to "escalate their operations to the maximum" to stop "the infidel elections."

Its origin could not be authenticated, but Islamic militants have used the site to claim responsibility for attacks and to condemn Iraq's interim government and US-led forces in Iraq.

Late Tuesday, several gun battles erupted in Baghdad's eastern Rashad neighborhood. In one skirmish, police fired at insurgents handing out leaflets warning people not to vote.

The leaflets, which did not bear the name of any insurgent group, said rebels would attack voters and polling stations with bombs, mortar fire and rockets.

"We promise to wash the streets of Baghdad with the blood of voters," the flyers warned. *AP*

British Council: RP has too many universities

From page A1

"quality assurance" in higher learning.

Citing the study's recommendations, Tayag said the CHEd had to update its minimum quality standards for new colleges and universities, and to improve its system of monitoring and evaluating existing ones.

The agency has only six staff members tasked with monitoring and evaluating all the 1,380 universities and colleges, as well as the hundreds of others that are applying for recognition.

"There's eventually a slippage (in quality) if you don't watch out," Tayag admitted.

Staff members at CHEd's regional offices have to be oriented about the new "operating handbook" on monitoring and evaluation that was recommended by the study.

Westaway stressed that the commission "should be more strict" in its monitoring work, in granting university status to schools, and in approving the applications of colleges and universities.

It should limit the eligibility to acquiring university status, she said. "Otherwise, there's a proliferation of universities that's diluting the quality."

University of the Philippines professor Honesto Nuqui, one of the consultants in the study, said the government could do with fewer state universities and colleges.

"If the Philippines has little money, it should concentrate on the small quality programs," he said.

Mike offers ₱25,000 for turning in a chainsaw

By Volt Contreras

IF HE can't catch them, he'll reward them.

With his verbal tussle with Sen. Jamby Madrigal simmering down, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor is trying a new tack in the fight against illegal logging: He will pay P25,000 for every chainsaw surrendered to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Defensor yesterday ordered his field officials in Quezon province to spread the word about his new campaign. He likened it to the government's anti-insurgency program, wherein rebels laying down their arms are given amnesty.

Chainsaw users are "at the front lines of illegal logging," he said, when asked why the campaign seemed to be aimed at individual tree cutters, and not the big bosses that critics like Madrigal had been challenging him to prosecute.

Defensor announced the reward system while admitting that the DENR was having difficulty securing sworn statements from common folk that could help build cases against big-time illegal loggers, particularly in Quezon.

"There's really great resistance [from the villagers]. Nobody wants to execute an affidavit," he told the INQUIRER.

But this is not hard to understand considering that up to "75 percent" of the residents in a barangay depend on illegal logging for a living, he said.

Defensor said such was the extent of this destructive trade, for example, in 15 barangays in General Nakar in Quezon. The town was one of the worst hit by flash floods and landslides in December.

"I've already warned the barangay captains there that if they will not help us, administrative cases will be filed against them," he said.

What will become of the chainsaw owner or keeper after he turns over his tool and gets his reward?

He will also enjoy amnesty from prosecution, Defensor said.

The scheme is initially being tested in Quezon, but Defensor said he would also talk to the governors of Agusan del Norte and Davao—where logging syndicates are also known to thrive—to replicate it there.

While dangling money, Defensor also did some tough-talking.

"There will be violence in the coming months because we expect more resistance [from illegal loggers]," he said, bringing up his earlier plan to arm at least 3,000 DENR forest guards.

Congressman, gov, 21 others accused of graft

From page A1

DENR confiscates eight trucks loaded with timber along Commonwealth Avenue yesterday. The trucks are now at Quezon City Parks and Wildlife. JOAN BONDOC

sources, Department of Budget and Management, and Commission on Audit.

They were all charged with graft for allegedly conspiring to release a "bloated" P135-million National Wealth Fund (NWF) to Quirino, which to date remains unaccounted for.

The complaint was filed last Dec. 9 by Dante C. Valencia, head of the Quirino-based Morjil C. Valencia Foundation Against Crime and Poverty Inc. The INQUIRER obtained early this week a copy of the complaint that cited a COA finding of an "over-release" of more than P131 million.

Blame for deadly floods

Valencia also tagged Cua's family as among those partly liable for the deadly floods in Aurora in early December.

"With the recent flash floods in Aurora province, evidently the rampant and continuous logging operation then of the logging companies of the family of Rep. Junie Cua in the Sierra Madre mountain ranges of Quirino and extended to Aurora province is one of the main causes of the recent man-made calamity of which they should be made answerable," part of the complaint read.

Politically motivated

Sought for comment, Cua said: "That is a politically motivated case."

He admitted that his father was a stockholder in the now defunct Luzon Loggers, which operated in Quirino.

"But that was a long, long time ago. There has been no commercial logging in Quirino since 1993 when a log ban was imposed," he said, adding:

"I even supported the moratorium on logging because there would no longer be an issue against us. Of late, I have told Quirino local officials that we should uphold such a moratorium."

Only P3 million

A large part of Valencia's complaint dwells on the alleged illegal release of Quirino's share of the NWF in 1995.

According to Valencia, the NWF represents the 40-percent share of the local governments in "mining taxes, royalties, forestry and fishery charges" in their areas, as provided for in the Local Government Code.

The DBM described the fund in a 1995 memorandum as the local government share in "the proceeds from the development and utilization of national wealth."

Under the Local Government Code, the provincial and city environment and natural resources officers (Penros and Cenros) are assigned to collect forest revenues and remit these to designated banks.

But Valencia said that in the case of Quirino, it was found that the fund collected was very much less than that released to the province. "There was an evident bloating" in the figures of forest revenues, he said.

He cited a report made by the COA in Cagayan Valley stating that the share of Quirino in the NWF should only be P3,402,570, representing forest charges collected in the province in 1994, and that there was an "over-release" of more than P131 million.

Valencia said the release of the huge amount to provincial and municipal officials in Quirino was anomalous because "there was actually no large amount of remittance for the collection of forest charges by the DENR-Penro of Quirino to the National Treasury."

For the province to get P135 million, the remittances should have amounted to more than P300 million, he said.

Conspiracy

Valencia said the "over-release" was "facilitated by several government officials systematically conspiring with one another to divest the government of public funds for their own benefit" by falsifying and fabricating public documents to commit the crime of plunder.

He said that he had spoken with some of the supposed beneficiaries, including barangay officials, and that they claimed they never received money representing their share of the NWF.

But Cua denied involvement in the matter.

"As congressman, I have no role or hand in determining the amount of such a fund and in the disbursement and release of the same," he said. "It's a fund directly given by the national government to local government units."

Cua also said the NWF share of Quirino was derived from previous logging operations.

"There is no logging now in Quirino, and there were no mining operations before," he said.

The other respondents named by Valencia were Budget Undersecretaries Cynthia Castel and Virgilio Ifurung, DENR Director Erlinda Meram, COA Assistant Commissioner Francisco Escarda, former Quirino Gov. Josie Co, former Quirino Mayors Andres Blando, Renato Ylanan, Delfin Vaquilar, James Aduca and Elpidio Naval.

Also named were Penro Patricinio Ragus, DENR accountant Milagros Castro, DBM financial service head Catalina Orendain and DBM budget specialist Gale Yambot.

Southern Leyte's logging

Despite President Macapagal-Arroyo's total log ban order following the disaster that hit Quezon and Aurora late last year, DENR officials in Southern Leyte have been allowing logging operations.

Southern Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado made this claim yesterday in a privilege speech, and said the logging operations were being conducted specifically in areas declared as watershed and calamity zones in Barangay Gawisan in Maasin City.

According to Mercado, the cutting of hardwood trees such as molave, narra and dao and other endangered tree species was being done by illegal loggers in connivance with local DENR officials and policemen.

He presented documents showing Cenro Elpidio Simon as having issued permits to cut the endangered trees.

Illegal logging charges

Mercado said the House committee on natural resources chaired by Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis had recommended the filing of illegal logging charges against Simon and other persons involved, including police officials.

Environment Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi, who was present at the last committee hearing on the issue, said an inquiry would be conducted regarding Mercado's exposé.

Landslide anniversary

The discovery of illegal logging operations in Southern Leyte came two weeks after residents marked the first anniversary of the Panaon Island landslides, which killed 300 people in the towns of San Francisco, Pintuyan and Liloan.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau said the disaster was caused by massive erosion caused by heavy rains and illegal logging. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Cynthia D. Balana*

Ex-AFP comptroller seals lips 21 times

From page A1

against him in the proper forum, pointing out that two complaints on his supposed unexplained wealth were pending in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Turning combative at one point, he said: "This inquiry is in violation of my right to procedural and substantive due process. This inquiry is being conducted, not in aid of legislation, but in aid of prosecution."

Rep. Rolex Suplico (LDP, Iloilo) came close to blowing his top at hearing those words from Ligot.

"General, you should learn your manners here," the lawmaker said.

Suplico left the hearing after a few minutes and told the INQUIRER: "He (Ligot) is lying, guilty and evasive."

"The cases of Ligot and Garcia show that there is a group of Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves in the AFP. The question is, who is Ali Baba?" Suplico said.

Private matter

Rep. Teofisto Guingona III (LDP, Bukidnon) tried to quiz Ligot about his alleged 8-ha property in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, but got the right-against-self-incrimination line from the retired general

Guingona also tried to question Ligot about the two California houses in the name of his wife.

But Ligot said: "The thing with my wife is a private matter."

When Guingona asked about Erlinda Ligot's occupation or source of income, the ex-general said: "I can't testify against my wife."

Rep. Ferjenel Biron (Lakas-Kampi, Iloilo) cited official immigration records indicating that Erlinda Ligot had traveled abroad 28 times beginning in 1998.

Asked by Biron whether he knew of these trips, Ligot said: "I can't recall how many times, where. I've been busy with my job as an officer of the [AFP]."

Rep. Janette Garin (Lakas, Iloilo) brought out records showing that Ligot's children Riza and Miguel, 24 and 19 years old, respectively, had assets in Bukidnon registered in their names.

Asked by Garin to explain how his children had come into possession of such assets, Ligot said they were his co-respondents in the cases pending at the Ombudsman.

"I'm invoking my parental and filial privilege," said Ligot, meaning he could not be compelled to testify against his own children.

Personal information

Senior Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Arthur Defensor (Lakas, Iloilo) managed to elicit only personal information from Ligot starting with his graduation from the Philippine Military Academy in 1970.

At best, Ligot admitted to Defensor that upon entering the military service, he had no property to speak of, and that upon retirement in 2004, he had assets of only P3 million.

Asked by Defensor about his other sources of income, Ligot repeated his right-against-self-incrimination line.

Sounding frustrated, Defensor said: "Is owning property illegal and immoral?"

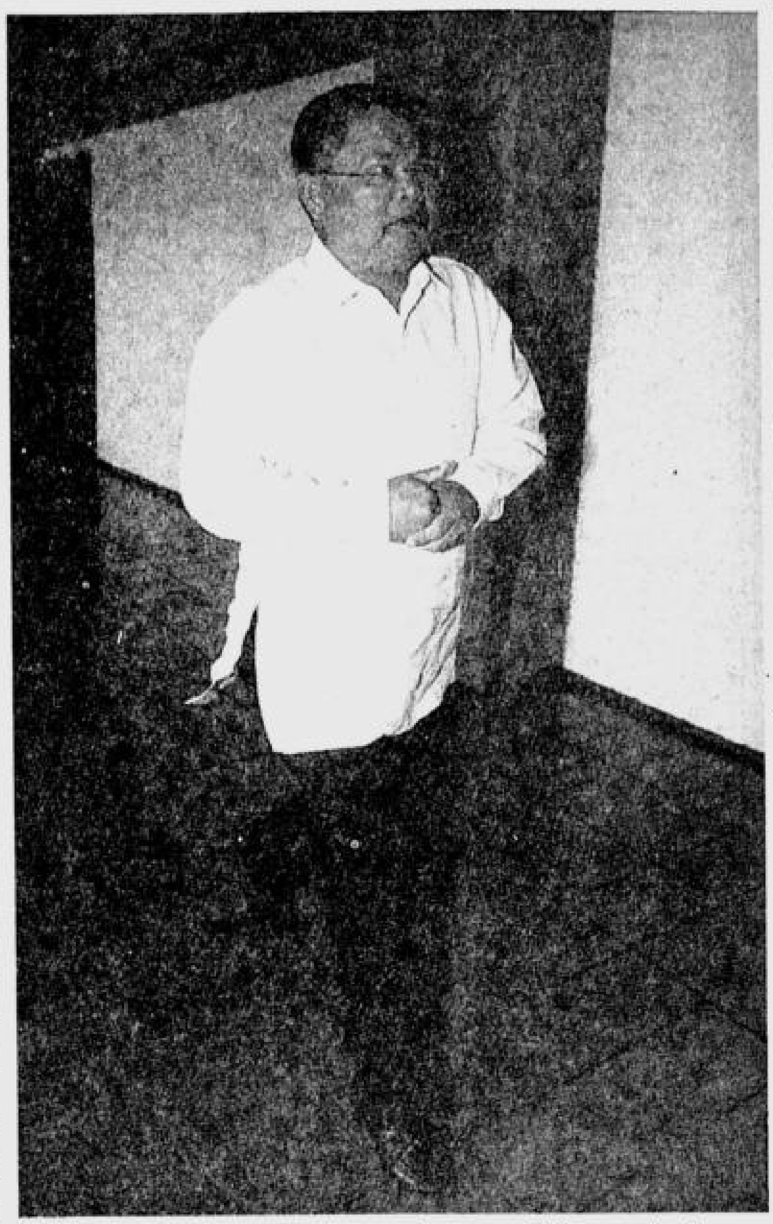
Rep. Roilo Golez, chair of the national defense committee, said Ligot was finally compelled to attend the House hearing after being issued a subpoena. Ignoring the subpoena would have meant his arrest.

"In more advanced democracies like the US, [invoking the right to remain silent] is morally damaging in the eyes of the public," Golez said, adding:

"While legal liabilities are shielded by invoking the right to remain silent, the moral implications are inescapable."

Web of corruption

In a prepared statement, Ligot said: "The subpoena itself states that I am being required to answer and testify under oath on alleged secret wealth covering alleged properties in the United States, Fort Bonifacio and Bukidnon.



A PATTERN of AFP comptrollers getting very rich is emerging from the investigation of Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot at the House of Representatives. JOAN BONDOC

"The inquiry is no longer confined within the limits of the honorable committee's established rules and procedures but has outrun individual rights and privileges."

But Golez said Ligot's refusal to explain his alleged secret wealth, which was first reported in Newsbreak magazine, only bolstered suspicions about the "web of corruption" in the AFP.

"It is apparent that a lot of wealth has been accumulated. There has been no denial," Golez said.

He observed that the Ligot and Garcia cases had "very striking" parallels. He said the two cases involved accumulation of vast assets and the implication of the two men's wives and children as accomplices.

Referring to Ligot and Garcia, Golez said: "One is the immediate successor or predecessor of the other. It's like technology was transferred."

Garcia's alleged corruption was exposed after his sons were caught at a US airport with an undeclared $10,000 in cash in December 2003. It turned out that it was not the first time the Garcias had brought huge amounts of dollars into the United States.

But the AFP only suspended Garcia in September 2004, after US authorities informed the Ombudsman about money-laundering complaints against Garcia, his wife Clarita and their two sons.

Assets galore

Newsbreak reported that Erlinda Ligot bought a house at 7102 Stanton Ave., Buena Park, California, for $183,868 in 2002, and another house at 1240 S. Cabernet Circle, Anaheim, California, for $504,000 on Dec. 23, 2003.

But all Ligot would say at the committee hearing was that this was "a private matter."

He denied that he had ignored summonses to appear before the committee. He said he had not been to his house in Muntinlupa City, and also denied that he could be reached at his addresses in Makati or Bukidnon.

Documents gathered by the committee showed that Ligot was the owner of an 8-ha poultry farm with a rest house in Malaybalay, Bukidnon; that his son Miguel was the owner of a 5.2-ha corn farm in Malaybalay, and that his daughter Riza was the owner of a 4-ha corn farm also in Bukidnon.

In a declaration of real property filed before the City of Taguig, Erlinda Ligot said she was the owner of a condominium unit on the 19th floor of Essensa East Forbes at Global City, Taguig.

The unit, which has a floor area of 290 square meters, is estimated at P22 million.

In 2003, Ligot reported total assets of P3,248,003 and a gross income of P617,395.95 from his salary in the AFP and income from his and his wife's investments in Parmil Farms Inc.

He also declared a paid income tax of P32,037.97.

High court junks Garcia's petition

THE SUPREME COURT threw out on Tuesday a petition by retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia seeking to dismiss the perjury cases filed against him before the Sandiganbayan in connection with the alleged false declaration of his assets and liabilities.

In a three-page resolution, the tribunal rejected Garcia's petition to overturn the Sandiganbayan decisions last month, which threw out his motion to quash two of four perjury cases against him and to consolidate these cases.

The high court also rejected Garcia's petition that it enjoin the antigraft court and the Office of the Ombudsman against "continuing with any and all actions related" to these cases.

"[Garcia's] consolidated petition is dismissed, there being no grave abuse of discretion committed by respondent Sandiganbayan," the Supreme Court said. *Philip C. Tubeza*

'General's' son bullies Bunye's driver

From page A1

Joel Rosales, 43, was on his way to pick up Bunye's wife, Miraflor, who is a doctor at the Makati Medical Center, when Alberto Dionisio Guerrero, 29, who was on his way to work, began shouting at him.

Guerrero, who drove a Honda Civic, later said in a radio interview that Rosales had hit the bumper of his car at the intersection of Alfaro and Sedeno streets.

But parking warden Patrick Ian Concepcion of the Makati Parking Agency reported that the two cars had no damage. He called the Makati traffic enforcement tow service to pull Bunye's Honda CRV to the sidewalk because the incident was choking up traffic.

Concepcion was collecting parking tickets around 8 a.m. yesterday when he saw the two men arguing in the middle of the street. He approached them and tried to pacify an incensed Guerrero.

Vouch for character

Bunye yesterday vouched for the character of Rosales, who has been driving for the family for five years.

In an early morning call to radio station dzBB, Bunye said the man poked a knife at his wife's driver and took the car keys after getting into a heated argument at the corner of Alfaro and Sedeno streets.

Invectives

Bunye said the man got out of his silver gray Honda Civic and shouted invectives at Rosales, saying Rosales did not know how to drive.

"My driver Joel Rosales, who is good and complies with traffic rules, calmly explained to him that he was not aware of any incident," Bunye said.

"But the other party said 'Don't you know me? I'm a general's son.' And he drew a knife and forcibly took the keys from my wife's car and left. My driver was left in the car and of course, it caused traffic," Bunye said.

Parking warden's story

Concepcion seemed to confirm Bunye's story.

According to him, Guerrero reportedly continued cursing, demanding Rosales pay him for damages and challenged the driver to a fistfight.

Concepcion said Guerrero pulled out a small weapon with a four-inch blade, threatening to kill Rosales if he didn't pay him but Rosales did not fight back.

BUNYE

The parking warden stayed between the two and tried to calm Guerrero, who rushed to the door of Bunye's Honda CRV. Rosales and Guerrero raced for the door but Guerrero got in first and took the car key.

Guerrero got out of the car without surrendering his license or the key, Concepcion said.

Bullying

He added that Guerrero had no idea that Rosales worked for Bunye and continued to bully the driver, saying he was a general's son and that Rosales shouldn't dare go to Ayala Alabang.

Guerrero denied he had pointed a weapon and that he had said he had a general-father over radio station dzBB around noon. He admitted cursing, but it was more of an expression of frustration and it was not personal.

Rosales has filed a grave threats and theft complaint against the suspect at the Makati Police yesterday afternoon. PO1 Menchaves Noriega will be investigating the case.

Car key still to be recovered

The key of Bunye's sport utility vehicle has yet to be recovered.

Bunye gave the silver gray Honda car's plate number—UKT 919—over the air.

"And we have alerted our friends in the LTO (Land Transportation Office), the police and other agencies, and of course our friends in media to trace the car and its driver," Bunye said.

Investigation under way

As Bunye was speaking, he said he just got a text message from LTO chair Analy Lontoc giving the name of the car's registered owner.

DzBB reported that operatives of the Traffic Management Group are conducting an investigation. *With a report from Irene Perez*

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3 CEOs join Arroyo Cabinet

From page A1

choice who brings a more global perspective to the Cabinet. Lotilla and Lina have very good records and deserve our support," Del Rosario said.

Businessmen had urged the President to sustain the trend in her next Cabinet appointments and not heed the lobbying of politicians coveting posts.

The appointments were welcomed by analysts as a sign the country's fiscal reforms remained on course.

"This will douse fears of a lull in the reforms," said Astro del Castillo, managing director of the investment firm First Grade Holdings.

But Forecast Ltd. said it was unlikely the new faces would be able to do anything radically new but had "come at a time when little needs to be done as there is a euphoria over Philippine assets at the moment."

Credibility

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, who also gives advice to the President, said the new Cabinet appointments not only "enhances perception of credibility" following the credit downgrade, but also "improves efficiency."

Standard & Poor's downgraded the foreign-currency rating of the Philippines—Asia's most active issuer of sovereign debt after Japan—by one notch to 'BB-' last week, citing a lack of urgency in tackling potentially painful reforms.

"(Energy Secretary) Perez is brilliant but he suffered a burnout after 18 months of fire-fighting oil price hikes," Salceda said.

He said the new appointments changed "the shape and complexion of the Cabinet from one that essentially repaid political debt to one that would create a mandate for the President through programs that would catch the fascination of the middle-class and intelligentsia."

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "The ongoing revamp projects a renewed sense of continuity and direction toward the realization of the President's 10-point agenda, as a new team is brought in to pull the economic carriage forward."

Potential conflict of interest

A potential conflict of interest in Lina's appointment is his ownership of 2100 Customs Broker Inc. and Linaheim Bonded Trading and Warehouse Inc., which operates at the old MIAA Road in Parañaque.

Judging by his tone when he answered his mobile phone yesterday, Lotilla had no idea he was going to be Perez's successor.

But the industry grapevine had been rife with talk that he was a strong contender for the energy post.

His surprised tone could likely be attributed to his not knowing when exactly Malacañang was going to announce his appointment, a source said.

Perez, who tendered his resignation as the country's energy czar Tuesday, said he welcomed Ms Arroyo's appointment of Lotilla to the Department of Energy.

"President Arroyo knows that a highly complicated energy sector needs a very competent and professional individual who will push forward the reforms that have been initiated in the past four years. I am confident that Lotilla is the right man for this post," he said in a statement yesterday.

"I call on everyone, especially the energy family, to throw their full support behind Lotilla as the sector sails through the challenging time of privatization in the power industry and deregulation of the oil sector," Perez said.

Litmus test

Investors view the $5-billion privatization of Napocor, which has crushing debts, as a litmus test for the government's pledge to reform the economy.

Dozens of Napocor plants are scheduled to be sold this year and early next year, helping the government ease its fiscal problems and stave off looming power shortages.

The government also aims to award a 25-year concession to operate the national power grid in the first quarter of 2005.

4 more bills to go

Battling weak tax collection and pervasive corruption, the Arroyo administration is hoping Congress will soon approve the remaining four of six bills designed to improve revenues.

Congress has passed two of the new measures—an increase in the "sin tax" on alcohol and cigarettes, and a system of rewards and penalties at the Bureau of Customs and the BIR.

The government expects this year's budget deficit to fall to 3.5 percent of gross domestic product from 3.9 percent in 2004.

Who's Who: Management/marketing whiz, top lawyer, cargo handler

From page A1

Santos is beloved and trusted by the business community, having sat on the board of a number of the country's top 100 corporations such as San Miguel Corp., Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Equitable PCIBank. He was elected leader of some of the country's most respected organizations such as the Management Association of the Philippines.

RAPHAEL LOTILLA

Barely a year after being tasked with overseeing the privatization of National Power Corp. as president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm), Raphael "Popo" Lotilla is seen as jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

Lotilla, a former editor-in-chief of the University of the Philippines' Philippine Collegian and a law professor, served as assistant director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) from 1996 to 2004 during which he pushed for the government's position in the crafting of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001.

He also served as a member of the editorial board of the Philippine Law Journal. Lotilla has undergraduate degrees in psychology and history from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, and a master of laws degree from the University of Michigan Law School.

He had considered resigning shortly after President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power in 2001 because he felt it was the proper thing to do being an Estrada appointee, according to Sergio Ortiz-Luis.

But Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, said business groups and members of the Arroyo Cabinet had prevailed upon Lotilla to stay because the government needed his expertise.

ALBERTO LINA

Ortiz-Luis said most businessmen were surprised that Alberto Lina, Airfreight 2001 chair, accepted his appointment as Bureau of Customs commissioner after previously turning down opportunities to work in government.

"We know he has a lot of money and going into government is a big sacrifice on his part. I guess (Trade Secretary Cesar) Purisima who recruited him changed his mind," Ortiz-Luis said.

A brother of former Interior Secretary Joey Lina, a former senator, Alberto Lina is the driving force behind the rise of Airfreight 2001 as one of the country's leading freight and cargo forwarding companies. It has since diversified into other businesses such as property development, agriculture and information technology.

A Federal Express licensee since 1989, Airfreight 2001 was ranked No. 596 among the country's top 1,000 corporations in 2003 with P1.1 billion in revenues.

In his six-page biodata faxed to Malacañang, Lina, a Philippine School of Business Administration graduate, included the seminars he attended, his speaking engagements and memberships in golf clubs. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

$1M-A-YEAR NY EXEC

Perez jokes he'll miss P1,000 rice allowance

By Christine O. Avendaño

OUTGOING Energy Secretary Vince Perez jokingly said yesterday that he would miss his P1,000 rice allowance, part of his take-home pay of P41,000 a month.

Perez said that when he was in the private sector he earned $1 million a year. He worked for one of New York's top investment houses before he joined the government.

But he said that despite the low salary and the pressure, his stint as energy secretary was a "wonderful learning experience."

"I tell anyone from the private sector who is complaining about the government not to complain and help volunteer and be part of government service, so that he'll know the challenges that we live in, the salaries that we earned," he said.

At the hearing on the Department of Energy's budget proposal for 2005, Perez insisted that family pressure and not external pressure prompted him to leave the government.

He gave this explanation to senators when Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago raised the subject of his plan to resign as energy secretary in March.

"Purely family pressure," Perez said as he reiterated that he wanted to spend time with his ailing father, who is suffering from Parkinson's disease.

The other day, Santiago said she suspected that Perez was resigning because of tremendous pressure from certain quarters in connection with the privatization of National Power Corp.

Santiago said Perez was probably leaving public service because he "found the kitchen too hot" due to "power brokers and power wielders" who were pressuring him on the Napocor privatization.

"Any talk about pressure from any group is completely false," Perez told reporters after the hearing, which ended with him thanking the senators for showing concern for the energy sector.

He said that some may find his excuse to leave the government "trivial" but he stressed "it is really important to me and my family."

He said there were "hot moments" during his stint, noting that the issues of the power rates, refund to customers of Manila Electric Co.'s over-billing and the blackouts in Luzon had placed him in the "hot seat."

"I just shrugged it off," Perez said.

Looking at his tenure, he said the challenge of being an energy secretary was to "balance so many interests."

"The interests here are often very powerful, very large, very financially affected," Perez said. "Therefore I have to find a middle ground to make sure that the combined interests of the industry and the consumers are taken into account. And oftentimes, making those decisions is politically difficult."

GARAN ANG N"
I KITA SA VAT!!
-GABRIELA
PRESYO TAAS NA!

JOAN BONDOC

A SCREAMING "NO" to the proposed VAT increase, which is now pending before Congress, from multisectoral groups including Gabriela which holds a protest rally on Wednesday.

NOT GOODBYE just yet for resigned Energy Secretary Vince Perez (at left), who has to put in an appearance before the Senate finance committee along with Philippine National Oil Co. Exploration Corp. president/CEO Eduardo Manalac and PNOC Enegy Development Corp. president Paul Aquino. JESS YUSON

Perez opposes lifting of VAT exemption of IPPs

By Christine O. Avendaño

OUTGOING Energy Secretary Vince Perez is not in favor of lifting the exemption from the 10-percent value-added tax being enjoyed by independent power producers (IPPs).

Perez said at a Senate hearing yesterday that lifting the VAT exemption of IPPs would result in higher power costs.

"VAT is something passed on to the consumer and, therefore, it would affect the consumer," he told senators belonging to the energy subcommittee that was scrutinizing the Department of Energy budget for 2005.

Perez agreed with Sen. Serge Osmeña's assessment that the imposition of the 10-percent VAT on generating companies would push power costs up by 10 percent.

It was Sen. Joker Arroyo who asked Perez to give his position on the possible reimposition of the VAT on generating companies that included IPPs.

Arroyo insisted the IPPs be made to pay the VAT after they were exempted initially in 2001 in order to lower electricity rates. He said the exemption was mysteriously inserted in the Electric Power Reform Act.

Perez said Arroyo's "legal argument" was correct but insisted that "if you re-impose the VAT, then it would directly go to consumers."

Arroyo dismissed Perez's explanation. "I don't see the reason for his position," he told reporters.

He said the IPPs "make a lot of money."

"So all this reasoning about passing on the burden to the consumers, I think, is all hogwash," Arroyo said.

Opposition walks out in bid to stop VAT express

From page A1

nority bloc left four members behind to question the quorum should the number of lawmakers on the floor fall to less than the required number of 119.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said on ANC News Channel that he expected the bill to pass on second reading between midnight and 2 a.m. today.

Earlier, Escudero made the motion to recommit the bill but it was defeated in a voice vote.

The motion was lost as whispers of a planned walkout by opposition lawmakers breezed through the chamber. As of 7 last night, no walkout had materialized, forcing television crews tipped off about the walkout to wait longer.

In an indication that the bill would be voted upon on second reading, a congressman's staffer was seen with a draft of an explanatory note defending a "yes" vote for the proposed increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent.

Similarly, there was at least one statement prepared in advance by the office of an opposition lawmaker who was supposedly joining the planned walkout.

The ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party in the House held a caucus yesterday afternoon to firm up the party's position approving the VAT increase.

Lakas Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Bukidnon) said the caucus was so "spirited" that a verbal tussle erupted, an indication of strong opposition to the measure which critics said would send prices of goods and services skyrocketing.

Zubiri said De Venecia, also the Lakas president, told party mates that the alternative to toeing the party line was a weakened revenue platform in the face of the country's fiscal problems.

"It is really difficult to shepherd this bill into approval but the alternative would be even worse and chaotic," Zubiri quoted De Venecia as saying.

"We have to push on with this bill and we have to act on it now," De Venecia told Lakas lawmakers, according to Zubiri.

It's not only Lakas which is committed to the passage of the VAT increase, which is provided in House Bill No. 3555.

Principal author Rep. Eric Singson (LP, Ilocos Sur) said that his party—the Liberal Party—had "taken a party stand and it's for the VAT."

Singson said administration parties Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino and the Nationalist People's Coalition were also endorsing the bill.

"We are scheduled to initiate it (approval on second reading) tonight (Wednesday)," he said.

Exempt sardines, noodles

As principal author, Singson said he would accept amendments on the floor, particularly the exemption of certain food items from the VAT increase. These are sardines, milk, cooking oil, instant noodles, homemade meat products and the like.

Singson also said that based on simulations done by the government, the VAT increase would have a minimal effect on inflation.

"Both the executive and legislative branches of government agree to include additional safety nets that would cushion the impact of the VAT increase on the marginalized sectors of society," Singson said.

Rep. Rodolfo Plaza (NPC, Agusan del Sur) said in a statement that the majority had a "sinister plan to railroad the VAT hike measure."

Plaza belongs to the NPC but he is counted in the opposition bloc, holding the title of deputy minority leader.

Plaza circulated 200 copies of his letter appealing to fellow lawmakers to oppose HB No. 3555 as part of their "sense of duty and mission as representatives of the Filipino people."

Rules violated

Six party-list members of the House heeded Plaza's call.

At a press conference, Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casino and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza of Gabriela said they were outraged by violations of the rules.

Ocampo said the bill was deliberated on in the ways and means committee, chaired by Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, on Jan. 6 with only a consumer group present. None of the 172 affected industry sectors were at the hearing to air their side.

Ocampo said no study was ever presented showing the impact of the additional tax burden on consumers, particularly the poor.

He questioned the Department of Finance estimate of P65 a month as the additional burden on poor families as this did not count the ripple effect of the VAT increase.

The five other party-list representatives said the approval of the bill on Jan. 7 was done without the full knowledge of the members of the committee.

Worse, its sponsorship on the floor that same day was made without passing through the rules committee.

"All these point out to one thing, that the House leadership, upon Malacañang's orders, is hellbent on approving this bill with no concern whatsoever for due process, the rule of law and the public good," the congressmen said in a joint press statement.

Without representation

"This is pure and simple taxation without representation. The only ones happy with this bill are the creditors to whom these additional taxes will go, and corrupt officials who will have more money to steal," it said.

Outside the House, the Freedom from Debt Coalition said the proposed increase in the VAT rate would amount to nothing unless the government stopped repaying billions of pesos in bad debts every year.

Huge public debt

In a statement, the FDC said the government's proposed tax measure was a "desperate" move to raise much-needed revenues without addressing the fundamental cause of the fiscal crisis, which is the huge public debt. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iraqi rebels intensify attacks on poll targets

BAGHDAD—Insurgents attacked the offices of three political parties northeast of Baghdad on Wednesday and released a video apparently showing three kidnapped election workers in the latest violence ahead of Sunday's landmark polls.

In the deserts of western Iraq, a US Marine transport helicopter ferrying troops crashed in the early hours, the military said in a statement. It said search and rescue teams were at the site and the casualty toll would be announced later.

Police in Baquba, a mixed Shiite and Sunni town 65 km north of Baghdad, said one policemen was killed and at least eight people wounded when gunmen opened fire on the local offices of three parties contesting the polls.

In the northern city of Mosul, a rebel stronghold that has seen persistent violence, a video filmed by insurgents showed three Iraqi men who had apparently been taken hostage and who said they worked for Iraq's electoral commission in the city.

On the video, a hooded insurgent carrying a pistol read out a statement as another masked guerrilla crouched with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher on his shoulder.

"We are mujahideen in the province of Nineveh. What they call elections have no basis in the Islamic religion and that's why we will hit all election centers," the statement said.

Several guerrilla groups in Iraq—including militants loyal to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida's leader in the country—have declared war on Sunday's elections, vowing to attack polling stations and to kill those who dare to vote.

The government has announced a set of extraordinary security measures to try to protect the polls, including closing Baghdad airport and land borders over the election period, extending night curfews in cities and banning cars from roads on election day.

Zarqawi, a Jordanian with a $25 million bounty on his head, says the election is a plot by Washington and Iraqi Shiite allies against Sunni Arabs, who were dominant during Saddam Hussein's rule but now fear being marginalized.

Iraq's Shiites, oppressed under Saddam, strongly support the elections. A list of candidates dominated by Shiite Islamists and drawn up with the guidance of Iraq's most revered cleric, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, is expected to win the most votes, cementing the newfound political power of Shiites. *Reuters*

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Over 300 Hindu pilgrims killed in India stampede

SATARA, India—More than 300 Hindu pilgrims were trampled or burnt to death and 200 injured Tuesday in a stampede followed by a raging fire at a religious festival in western India, police said.

Additional Director General of Police V.N. Deshmukh said most of the dead were women and children who were jammed into a hill-top temple and narrow access road.

"Over 300 were killed and four buses full of injured people have been sent to various local hospitals in the district of Satara," Deshmukh in Bombay said.

The tragedy occurred during the annual pilgrimage to the Mandhradevi temple near the town in the Satara district of western Maharashtra state. The hillside temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Mandhradevi, said district official Sharad Jadhav.

Deshmukh warned the death and injury toll was expected to go up as the bodies of the dead and injured arrived at hospitals in Satara district, 300 km south of Bombay, a correspondent reported.

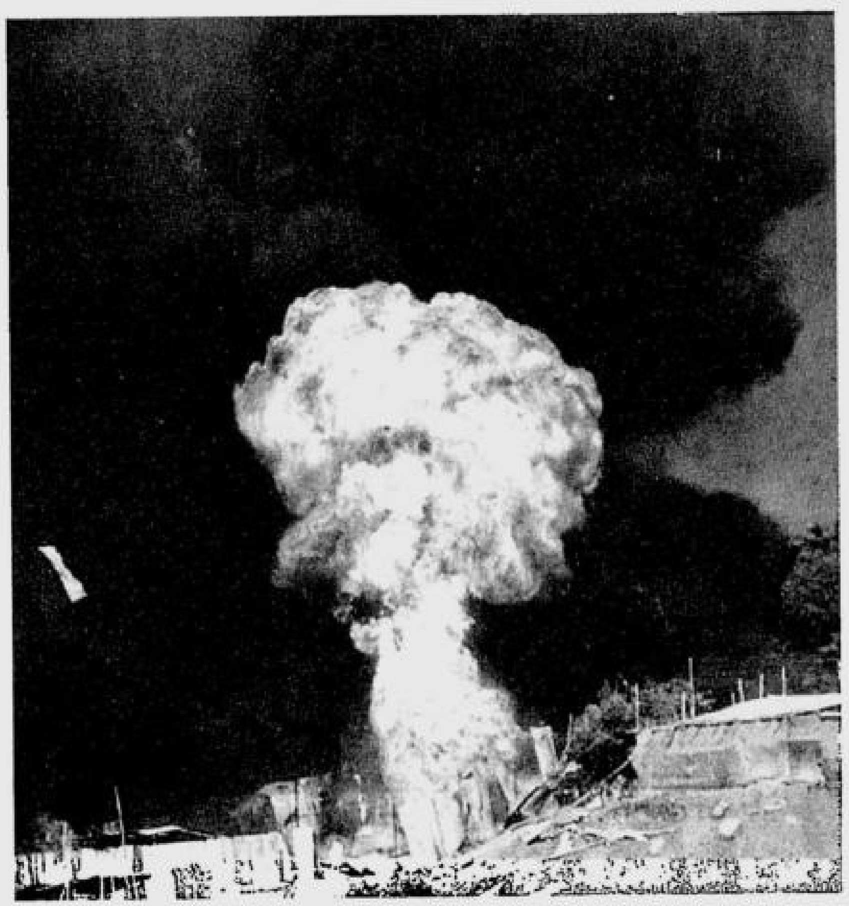
Television footage showed at least one fiery explosion followed by flames and black smoke billowing from the top of the hill where the temple was located.

People were seen running frantically down the slopes.

Deshmukh said 300,000 to 400,000 people had gathered at the temple site Tuesday night for the sighting of the full moon and to make offerings to the local goddess in the temple town of Wai.

Grief-stricken families were arriving at hospitals to identify bodies and take them away for funerals.

"We're collecting the bodies of the dead. Relatives are coming here and identifying them and taking them home," one government official said on television.



SMOKE billows after a fire breaks out a temple in Wai village, about 250 km south of Bombay, India, on Tuesday. Thousands of Hindu pilgrims fleeing the fire panicked, triggering a stampede, police said. AP

It was the deadliest stampede in years at a religious event in India where sometimes millions of people mass in perilous safety conditions.

Deshmukh said the midday crush was triggered by a clash between pilgrims and a few shopkeepers. Some of the devotees attacked roadside food vendors leading to gas cylinders exploding and starting the blaze.

Television footage showed scenes of chaos as people looted shops.

"The situation was aggravated by the fact that there were thousands of pilgrims coming out of the temple and thousands trying to get into the temple," Deshmukh said.

Another witness said an overhead electric cable was believed to have fallen on some pilgrims, causing further panic. *AFP*

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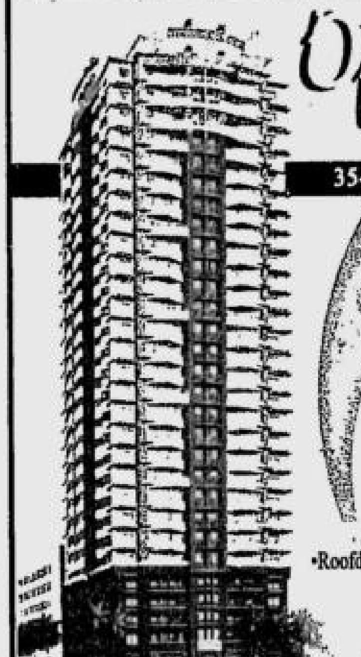
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Annan probed anew over oil-for-food scam

UNITED NATIONS—UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was questioned for a third time in as many months Tuesday by the independent commission he set up to investigate Iraq's scandal-plagued oil-for-food program, his spokesperson said.

The UN chief was questioned for almost two hours on Tuesday, spokesperson Fred Eckhard said, without revealing what was discussed in the session.

"That last meeting has just ended and it lasted one hour and 45 minutes," Eckhard told reporters here.

Earlier Tuesday, in taking reporter's questions over the affair which has tarnished the world agency's image, Eckhard said Annan had been probed formally on two occasions over the matter.

Paul Volcker, a former US federal reserve chair, leads the commission which is expected to deliver a preliminary report in late January or early February.

"(Annan) has been questioned and most likely will continue to be questioned as Mr. Volcker's investigation continues," Eckhard said.

Eckhard said the UN chief had been questioned on two occasions prior to Tuesday: For one hour and 45 minutes on Nov. 9 and for 25 minutes on Dec. 3.

Oil-for-food, the UN's largest aid program ever, was set up to monitor the purchase of humanitarian supplies by Saddam Hussein's government, which was under sanctions for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. *AFP*

Police arrest 46 suspects in anti-Mafia raids in Sicily

ROME—Italian police on Tuesday launched a vast anti-Mafia raid in Sicily, arresting 46 suspects and closing in on the Sicilian underworld's "boss of all bosses," Bernardo Provenzano, who has eluded repeated drag-hunts for more than 40 years.

Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisano said the Sicilian Mafia known as the Cosa Nostra had "suffered a very heavy blow. Provenzano is cornered. Life is going to get a lot more difficult for him."

Provenzano was believed to have become the Cosa Nostra's top boss after Salvatore "Toto" Riina was caught in 1993. Provenzano received a life sentence in absentia in 1999 for his part in a bomb attack that killed top anti-Mafia prosecutor Paolo Borsellino and five bodyguards.

National anti-Mafia prosecutor Piero Luigi Vigna said that by arresting many of Provenzano's henchmen, police may now be in a position to flush the Mafia capo out of his hiding place, which is believed to be somewhere near the legendary base of the crime organization at Corleone, west of Palermo.

"We hope that by removing all the water around him, the fish will finally emerge," Vigna said.

A key step in the operation was the arrest of Francesco Pistoia, 62, the man police believe was Provenzano's main link in relaying orders to his lieutenants via a communications system that covered the island.

In an operation that took three years to prepare, 1,000 police and carabinieri officers staged one of the biggest anti-Mafia raids in recent memory. They carried out hundreds of searches, and arrested 46 men on charges of extortion, drug and weapons possession and murder.

Sicily's chief anti-Mafia investigator Piero Grasso told a news conference in Palermo that police brought forward the raid after receiving information the organization was about to embark on a new wave of killings, and that some of the accused Mafiosi were planning to start a new life in South America.

Italian newspapers said one of the intended victims was Grasso himself. The Cosa Nostra has murdered dozens of politicians, judges and prosecutors, including two of Grasso's predecessors, Borsellino and Giovane Falcone, who were murdered at an interval of three months in 1992.

Such is the sinister power of the mob that the Italian Parliament's anti-Mafia commission has described the criminal organization as not only a force against the state, but one that operates within state institutions. *AFP*

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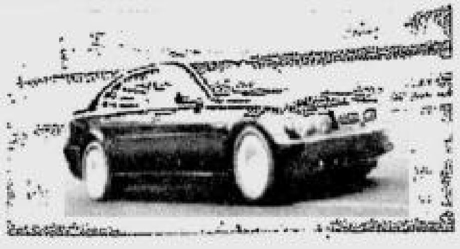
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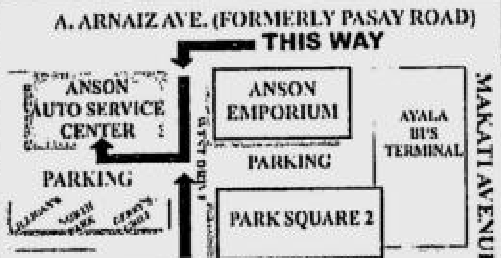

OPEN MONDAY TO SUNDAY

Chancellor Schroeder expresses Germany's shame for the Holocaust

BERLIN—Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder expressed Germany's shame for the Holocaust on Tuesday, as Europe started commemorating the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

SCHROEDER

"I express my shame over those who were murdered, and before those of you who have survived the hell of the concentration camps," he told an audience of Auschwitz survivors and Jewish leaders in Berlin.

"Millions of children, women and men were suffocated with gas by German SS troops and their accomplices, or starved and shot," said Schroeder, clad in a black suit and tie, in a simple and emotional speech.

"Jews, Sinti and Roma (gypsies), homosexuals, political opponents, prisoners of war and freedom fighters throughout Europe were utterly destroyed with cold, industrial perfection or enslaved until their deaths."

"The vast majority of Germans alive today are not to blame for the Holocaust, but they do bear a special responsibility," he said.

Out of the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, more than one million were killed, most of them gassed to death, at Auschwitz, southern Poland from 1940 until the time it was liberated by the Red Army on Jan. 27, 1945.

In France, President Jacques Chirac led anniversary events, inaugurating a Holocaust memorial in Paris, including a "Wall of Names" that commemorates the tens of thousands of Jews deported to their deaths from France.

In an address to dignitaries and survivors, he described anti-Semitism as a "perversion that kills" and pledged French support for Israel, whose existence, he said, was justified by the suffering of Jews in World War II.

"I want to say again that anti-Semitism has no place in France. Anti-Semitism is not a point of view. It is a perversion, a perversion that kills. It is a hatred whose roots go to the very depths of evil," he said.

France has seen a rise in recent years of insults and attacks on Jewish people and property— most of it attributed to young Muslim men angry about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

The chair of the World Jewish Congress, Israel Singer, used the occasion to assert that in Europe, the lessons of the past were being forgotten and called for a commission to be formed to address the problem.

"While apologists clamor Holocaust fatigue, deniers receive open forums to spread their lies and instructors teaching the Holocaust this week are shouted down by their students in various European countries," he said in a vehement speech at Berlin's German Theater.

"And we experience insensitivity toward the Holocaust by Europe's younger generation, sometimes from the highest and most important families," he said, in an apparent reference to Britain's Prince Harry dressing as a Nazi for a costume party.

"A Europe-wide commission to consult, to construct and to implement principles for spreading this information... must be established now while the victims are still alive and able to give witness correctly, not some day later on," he said.

The Vatican, in a text released on Tuesday, said that the concentration camps represent one of the darkest chapters of the last century and will forever remain a "shameful stain on the history of mankind."

It urged people not to "forget the terror of which man is capable; the evils of arrogant political extremism and social engineering; and the need to build a safer, saner world for every man, woman and child to live in." *AFP*

THIS picture released by the Italian culture ministry shows part of fading frescoes in a convent building in Florence, Italy, which researchers believe may have been a workshop used by Italian Renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci. AP

Da Vinci's workshop discovered in Italy

ROME—A forgotten workshop of Leonardo da Vinci, complete with 500-year-old frescos and a secret room to dissect human cadavers, has been discovered in Florence, Italy, researchers said on Tuesday.

The find was made in part of the Santissima Annunziata convent, which let out rooms to artists centuries ago and where the likely muse of the Renaissance artist's masterwork, the Mona Lisa, may have worshipped.

"It's a bit absurd to think that, in 2005, we have found the studio of one of history's greatest artists. But that is what has happened," said Roberto Manescalchi, one of three researchers credited for this month's discovery.

"The proof is on the walls." Frescos adorning part of the workshop were left undisturbed over the centuries and gradually forgotten. The wing of the convent was eventually split by a wall and is partially claimed today by the Institute of Military Geography.

In a slide-show presentation to media, Manescalchi pointed to one colorful fresco with a character conspicuously missing from the foreground.

The white silhouette bore a striking resemblance to Da Vinci's painting of the archangel Gabriel, who appears in his "Annunciation" hanging in Florence's Uffizi gallery.

Manescalchi, who refers to the silhouette as "The Ghost," told reporters it was not clear to him whether the angel was removed or perhaps never completed.

The walls were also adorned with paintings of birds, one of which strongly resembled a sketch from Da Vinci's "Atlantic Codex," a 1,286-page collection of drawings and writings by the painter, sculptor, inventor and scientist.

Another painting was similar to a drawing in Da Vinci's codex on the flight of birds. *Reuters*

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Bush to crack down on illegal immigrants, workers

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush plans to ask Congress to spend more to crack down on undocumented workers and arrest and deport illegal immigrants. But he wants to fund only a fraction of the new Border Patrol agents called for in a bill he signed last year.

Bush's budget plan will call for spending $23 million, nearly five times the current level, on work site investigations by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a government official familiar with the spending plan said Tuesday. The money would be used to conduct audits on employers, investigate violations and prepare cases.

The administration also wants to increase spending for detentions and deportations of immigrants to $1.2 billion, 18 percent more than in fiscal year 2005, the official said. In addition to paying for more staff, the money would go to apprehending fugitives and providing alternatives to detention for low-risk illegal immigrants awaiting deportation.

Homeland Security Department spokesperson Dennis Murphy declined to comment on the numbers because the 2006 budget has not been released. He warned figures can change up until it is actually sent to Congress.

Bush plans to ask lawmakers to increase the Border Patrol by 210 agents. The intelligence overhaul law he signed last year authorizes, but does not pay for, the department to hire 2,000 agents a year for five years.

That would nearly double the number of agents guarding US borders with Mexico and Canada to almost 21,000 and would be the largest buildup of border guards in the nation's history.

Outgoing Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson, who oversees transportation and border security, has said paying for the 2,000 agents would require a substantial investment from Congress.

"It appears, perhaps, the administration is looking a bit more comprehensively on immigration enforcement. For too long we have focused only on the border, and many people have indeed been calling for renewed attention to the hiring of undocumented workers because that is the primary draw," said Deborah Meyers, a policy analyst at the Migration Policy Institute, a Washington-based think tank that tends to favor immigration.

Meyers said Bush's proposals on Border Patrol agents are a recognition of the difficulty the government would face recruiting and training such a high number of agents.

Bush also has proposed a temporary worker program open to immigrants illegally in the country and foreigners abroad.

Bush is expected to submit his budget early next month. Congress is not obligated to implement the president's budget but can use it as a guide. *AP*

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US set to test radio technology at land borders

NOGALES, Arizona—US officials want to see if the same technology that speeds cars through highway tolls and identifies lost pets can unclog border crossings without compromising security.

Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson announced Tuesday that the government will begin testing radio frequency identification technology at this crossing and four others by midsummer.

Weeding out potential terrorists, drug dealers and other criminals from shoppers, truckers and tourists who regularly pass through border crossings takes time. The RFID technology is designed to reduce the wait while giving authorities more information on who's coming into the country and who's leaving.

"We do not keep track of who enters this country," Hutchinson said while standing in an inspection booth at a crossing that is used each year by 5.4 million pedestrians and 3.9 million vehicles. "We need to have a comprehensive system, and that's what our pilot (test) will do."

Currently, foreign visitors at the 50 busiest land border crossings in 10 states are fingerprinted as part of the government's new screening system. The system, called US-Visit, scans photographs of the visitor's face and index fingers into a computer, which are matched with federal agencies' criminal databases.

With RFID technology, people or objects are identified automatically and swiftly. That allows vehicles outfitted with the technology to zip through toll plazas without stopping but won't at the border. People and vehicles still will have to stop, but if their identifying data produce no red flags, they will get just a cursory check rather than lengthy questioning.

The chip with the identifying information would be placed in a document, such as the state department-issued border crossing cards for those who regularly make short trips across the Mexican border.

The chip is attached to an antenna that transmits a signal to a handheld or stationary reader, which converts the radio waves from the RFID tag into a code that links to identifying biometrical information in a computer database read by border agents. *AP*

AUSSIE DAY

Pleasure crafts join commercial vessels in a parade past the Sydney Opera House during the Australia Day celebrations at the Sydney Harbor Wednesday. Millions of Australians across the country celebrated their national day with activities ranging from barbecues to boating.

REUTERS

Obese moms = obese kids, says US research finding

WASHINGTON—The children of overweight mothers are 15 times more likely to be obese by age 6 than children of lean mothers, US researchers reported on Tuesday.

The children start piling on the pounds at age 3, the team at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania found.

The study, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, suggests that doctors need to start watching out for the children of overweight parents very early—by age 4 at the latest, the researchers said.

"We found dramatic increases in body fat between ages 3 and 6," said Dr. Robert Berkowitz, who led the study.

"We should be doing prevention and treatment programs at a much earlier age," Berkowitz added in a telephone interview.

"Everyone knows how difficult it is to take weight off once you are overweight."

Berkowitz said his team is now examining the eating and exercise habits of the families they studied but said other studies clearly show genes play an important role. The dramatic spike in weight between ages 3 and 6 support this, he said.

"This suggests that some genes controlling body weight may become active during this period," Berkowitz said.

Writing in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Berkowitz and colleagues said they studied 70 children at the hospital over a six-year period.

About half had overweight mothers and half had lean mothers. *Reuters*

Space station crew starts spacewalk

MELBOURNE, Fla.—The crew aboard the International Space Station slipped into spacesuits and floated out a hatch early on Wednesday to begin a planned 5 1/2-hour spacewalk, the first since the men arrived at the outpost three months ago.

Wearing Russian pressurized spacesuits, Nasa astronaut Leroy Chiao and cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov opened the hatch on the station's Pirs docking module at 2:43 a.m. as the outpost soared over the southern Atlantic Ocean.

"Leroy, careful there," flight directors at the Russian Mission Control Center outside Moscow radioed to the crew in Russian as they prepared to open the hatch to leave the station.

"Just pull on it and that's it," the flight director said.

The spacewalk was broadcast on Nasa Television, with commentary from mission control in Houston and English translation through the Russian mission control in Korolev.

Chiao, who has made four spacewalks during previous missions, and Sharipov, on his debut outing, gathered the last of their tools and two bundles of equipment and slipped into the vacuum of space. *Reuters*

US says Syrian funding al-Qaida

WASHINGTON—The United States on Tuesday accused a Syrian of bankrolling al-Qaida and rebels in Iraq, a first step toward an international freeze on his bank transfers and travel.

The US Treasury said Sulayman Khalid Darwish provides money and material to al-Qaida and its group in Iraq, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

"This terrorist financier is helping support Zarqawi, who has launched violent acts against our troops, coalition partners and the Iraqi people," Treasury Secretary John Snow said in a statement.

"Identifying financial operatives and choking off the flow of blood money moves us closer to our ultimate goal of fracturing the financial backbone of the Iraqi insurgency and al-Qaida," he said.

The United States said it would ask the United Nations' so-called 1267 committee to place Darwish's name on a list of persons tied to al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.

All member countries are required to block travel and funds transfers of persons on the list and to deny them arms and military equipment, the Treasury Department said. *AFP*

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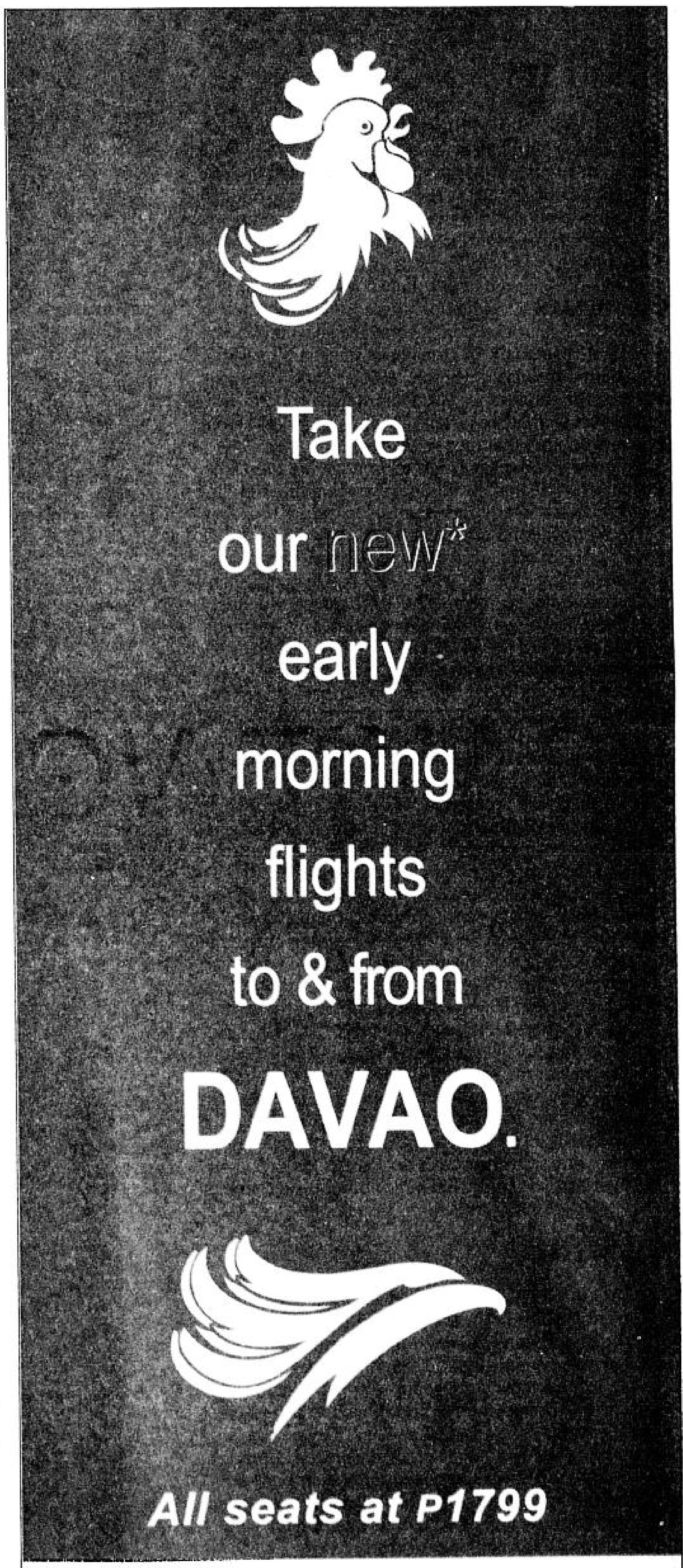

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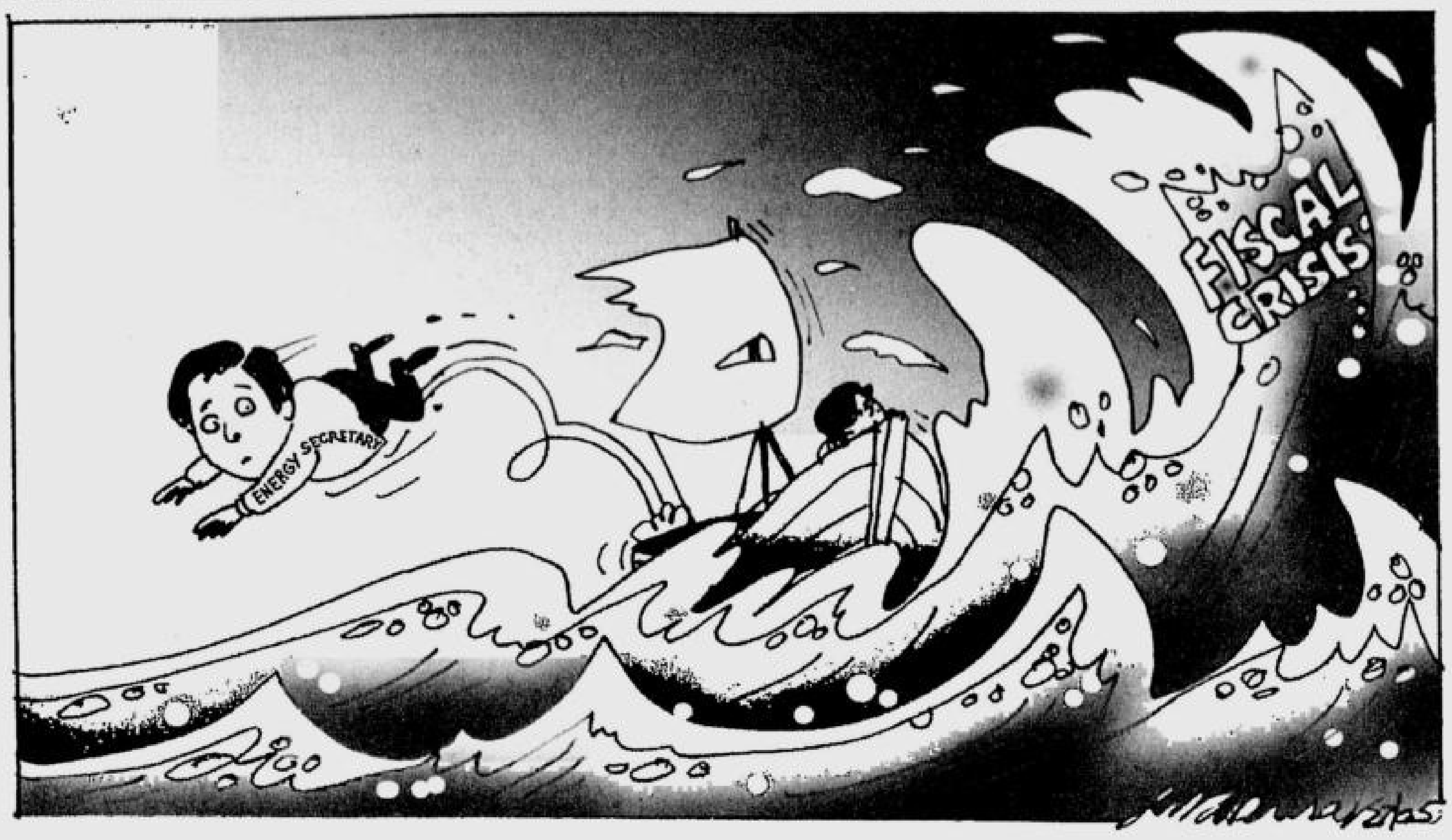

Small fry

EDITORIALS

THE ANNOYING THING about the exchange between Environment Secretary Michael Defensor and Sen. Jamby Madrigal is that the fundamental connection between forest land use agreements and deforestation has been lost in the din. With Defensor's shooting-from-the-hip ad hominems (unfortunate for, as he has admitted, lack of research) and Madrigal's prompt rebuttal coupled with a call for his resignation, there is nothing much to chew on beyond the question of who between them actually has the bigger penchant for photo ops. (Both officials are highly visible, each obviously aware of the importance of media mileage; both have been known to invite reporters and photographers to join some raid or other that they instigated.)

The attentive observer is left to wonder whether, after the smoke has cleared, it will be proven that the Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force is indeed afraid to "go up" to the big fish (as Madrigal and others suspect), or whether "small fry" Mayor Hernando Avellaneda of General Nakar, Quezon, one of those charged with illegal logging per Defensor's earlier announcement, is indeed a target of political harassment (as Bangon Pilipinas has claimed). Avellaneda has gone on record to call Defensor a "liar." The environment secretary has yet to give the lie to that charge.

Defensor also has to amply demonstrate that Pamalakaya was merely talking through its hat when it said that the task force was turning a blind eye to six big logging corporations supposedly permitted by Malacañang to operate in the provinces of Quezon and Aurora. All he has said by way of rebutting the grave accusation was that members of the militant alliance of fisherfolk were helping illegal loggers take timber out of the forest via the Umiray River—an accusation that the group has both ridiculed and denied.

Blood being thicker than water, it's understandable that Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago would publicly request Madrigal to go easy on her "juvenile" nephew. (Imagine the tongue-lashing that the nemesis of fungus faces must have privately administered on the young man in the course of improving his education in politics, also known as the art of the possible, or even in simple prudence.) But it's unlikely that the discerning public would be as indulgent. The state of the Philippine forest cover as dismal as it is, there is just no room for "exuberant excesses" in whoever holds the environment portfolio. It's not child's play. If Defensor can't address the problem of deforestation even with state resources to back him, President Macapagal-Arroyo should find him another playground.

Big time

BEFORE DEFENSOR accused her family of maintaining interests in logging and mining, and the thrust and parry between them ensued, Madrigal had asked that the glare of official attention be trained on "big-time loggers," or "the people who hide behind the so-called forestry agreements and other forest land use special permits." These are not the "illegal loggers" against whom the full might of Defensor's task force is ranged; these are the ones armed with such papers as timber license agreements, or industrialized or socialized forest management agreements, and therefore "legally" allowed to operate in Philippine forests.

These are the loggers that Defensor had earlier absolved of responsibility in the landslides and floods that killed more than 1,000 people in Quezon and Aurora, but whose operations the clergy of the Prelature of Infanta (Quezon) had asked to be stopped. "We should no longer allow the irresponsible use of the environment for the self-interest of individuals and the so-called development agenda of the government and some private sectors," Bishops Rolando Tria Tirona and Julio Labayen and 24 priests said in a "statement of conviction" issued early this month. They said "God's clear message for all of us now" was that the Sierra Madre and all other Philippine forests should be protected for the generations to come.

For the past years God's message, as illustrated vividly in the terrible toll exacted on life and property by the decimation of our forests, has been constantly flashing. But it has been for naught, and, like broken Haiti, this country is inexorably washing into the sea.

Now where would reforestation czar Victor Corpus, having officially, inexplicably, beat an early retreat from the fight against illegal loggers, find ground to plant his trees?

Multiple lives

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ANOTHER Australian newspaper has given local readers a rare insight into one of our reclusive—and controversial—Filipino businessmen, Eduardo Cojuangco.

As Australia's oldest (founded 1831) daily, the Sydney Morning Herald arguably packs the most clout in Down Under's largest city. Herald's measured style outstrips the influence of Rupert Murdoch's sensation-packed Daily Telegraph.

In "The Two Lives of the Boss," the Herald's Kate Askew underscores contrasts in the Cojuangco that Australians and Filipinos see.

Earlier, Sun Herald's Frank Walker reported how Australian courts tracked Ferdinand Marcos funneling, between 1982 and 1985, almost $169 million from the shell Lichtenstein foundation Vibur. Laundered funds set up, in luxury, a then-pregnant former Playboy model, Evelyn Hegyesi. Her daughter was named Analisa Josefa. "Marcos' mother was Josefa," Walker wrote.

Padding about, without bodyguards, in his $3-million Spanish style-hacienda in Mudgee (population: 8,500), New South Wales, "Cojuangco could be any gentleman farmer and horse breeder," Askew writes. "He leads a private life and does not mix with Filipinos living here."

But his $1.78-billion bid for a dairy company, National Foods, made via publicly listed San Miguel Corp., thrust him into the limelight. "National Foods' high brand integrity is vital to the Philippine company... San Miguel is hardly a well-known brand here." If the deal is sealed, "40 percent of the Philippine company's revenues will be sourced in Australia."

But life isn't simple on home soil for the insulari who "became extraordinarily wealthy during the Marcos regime," then scrammed with them to Hawaii, a step ahead of furious people power crowds.

"Unlike Marcos, Cojuangco wound his way back to the top when the time was right," Askew notes. He hitched his wagon to Joseph Estrada who won in 1998, but whose corrupt government was ejected by People Power 2.

Cojuangco "bought himself a couple of years' grace with the Arroyo government." He yielded seats in the SMC board and leveraged a 15-percent (now 19.1 percent) investment by the brewer Kirin. "Arroyo remains wary of Cojuangco," even as SMC revenue grew by 21 percent under Cojuangco's watch.

The coconut levy, however, haunts Cojuangco. So does the tough Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government. How did Cojuangco nail 20 percent of SMC? the PCGG asks. And were additional shares of SMC bought with the levy which, as the Catholic Bishops' Conference noted, cronies controlled?

The anti-graft court and the Supreme Court have ruled that coconut revenues are public funds. Cojuangco's legal counsel, Estelito Mendoza, emphasized to the Herald that the recent ruling did not relate to Cojuangco's own stake of 19.2 percent in SMC. That's to salvage part of the loot, scoffs the Philippine Peasant Institute.

In retaliation, "the Brat Pack" of Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition tried to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide. "The complaint was thrown out," Askew recalled.

Are those the same forces at work in the new moves to downgrade the PCGG from an independent agency into an attached office, allegedly for efficiency and economy? "The voice is that of Jacob, but the hands are that of Esau."

Levies bought the First United Bank, then being offered for sale by no other than Cojuangco. It became the United Coconut Planters Bank. For every nine shares issued to so-called coconut farmers, Cojuangco got one, Yorac says in a paper she wrote for the Herald.

In addition, he managed the bank for a decade and chose all its directors. Martial law dictated that all levies were deposited with UCPB at zero interest. More significant, who was the unnamed principal who snapped up 20 percent, dipping into the levy? Yorac asks.

When people power erupted on Feb. 25, 1986, the identity became clear. "Stock certificates of these holding companies endorsed in blank were found in the hastily abandoned bedroom and toilets of the former occupants of Malacañang."

Many Filipinos believe the country should now move beyond legal arguments. "Half of the country believes Cojuangco used his position with Marcos to build up his own interests," the Herald notes. Others commend him for standing up to the foreign coconut industry.

After winning the Fernhill Handicap with the Gai Waterhouse-trained gelding Clonmel in 2000, Cojuangco gave one of his rare public addresses. "I enjoyed Australia the first time I came here to buy a horse in 1959," he told the crowd. "This is my second country. My family, my grandchildren, they also love it."

Thanks for his benevolence from local businessmen elicited this response from Cojuangco, "It's no good having a pocketful of pesos if you can't spread a little sunshine," Herald racing writer Max Presnell reported.

Do that, asks Lea Kuizon, an aging small coconut planter in Bato, Southern Leyte. Kuizon's mother died holding coco levy certificates that never paid a centavo. He fears that will be his fate, too.

Kuizon has good reasons. A cash-strapped Arroyo administration has signaled it will siphon the levy to keep its head above the water. Looting is not lovelier the second time around.

* * *

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Postscript

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

UNLIKE Time's "Person of the Year," the INQUIRER's "Filipino of the Year" is based not just on the impact someone had on this country but on the **positive** impact someone had on this country. If it were just plain impact, my own vote (figuratively, since I am not one of the editors) would have gone to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. She had the biggest impact on the country, dragging it to new depths, economically, politically and morally. The country was worse off last year than in 2002, and 2002 was a horrible year. Proof of it being that GMA vowed not to run at the end of it, knowing she had brought it to that pass.

But I agree with the INQUIRER editors, the Filipino of the Year is Fernando Poe Jr. Other figures did have a positive impact on this country, but none as huge as FPJ. Ironically, he did so in death more than in life.

Some observers say FPJ was simply romanticized in death, or invested with the heroic proportions he never had in life, other than in the movies. His detractors have pointed out that his widow, in particular, has no business complaining about other people stealing his dreams—a reference to FPJ being cheated in the elections—as they themselves stole the dreams of Filipinos in the past. Both FPJ and Susan Roces, their detractors say, were Marcos supporters, and even had Marcos and Imelda as their chief sponsors during their wedding. And they, along with Erap, campaigned for Marcos during the "snap elections."

I agree that FPJ was romanticized in death and that he was a Marcos supporter. But those things show FPJ not just in the worst light but in the best as well. Marcos and Imelda did stand as their wedding sponsors, but that was way back 36 years ago last Christmas, when Marcos had a legitimate right to rule. It was Marcos' first term, after he beat Diosdado Macapagal in 1965.

More than that, though FPJ and Susan Roces did support Marcos and though they did appear with him onstage in January 1986, they were neither Malacañang cronies nor mendicants. There is no record of FPJ or Susan Roces soliciting favor from Marcos. In the same way that there is no record of FPJ soliciting favor from Erap, his bosom friend. To Erap's chagrin, who kept asking why he kept away and begging him to come see him. If FPJ was a supporter of Marcos and Erap, then it was Marcos and Erap who benefited from it rather than the way around. You can accuse him of not being very smart, or indeed of being politically naïve, but you cannot accuse him of being opportunistic.

I don't know that he would have made a good president, as I've repeatedly said. To this day, I have my misgivings. My friends from that camp have all tried to convince me he wasn't Erap, he had never abused friendship and power, he had never practiced nepotism, he wasn't indebted to anyone, particularly the elite. But the downside is far more formidable. You saw it abundantly and physically in the people who sat in the front pew in his wake, among them Erap and the various unsavory characters from the so-called opposition, who made Edsa 2 not just possible but necessary. This was the company he kept, particularly during the last elections. That is where his political innocence looms large: He would have learned the ropes from **these** guys. I did write about it last December: Look at this crew, and weep.

But FPJ did make a positive impact on the country in a couple of ways.

The first is by probably winning the elections. Though shut out from ABS-CBN and other media, and though mugged from the start by the worst Comelec since Marcos, he did enough to make GMA's current occupation of Malacañang at least questionable. I do hope his widow pursues his protest, inside and outside of the courts. Frankly, I cannot imagine how Hilario Davide could have fallen from the heights he occupied during the impeachment trial, when he turned legalese into the language of cool, to the depths of presiding over a Supreme Court populated by kangaroos. Susan Roces would do well to take her case to the court of public opinion alongside the legal one. The first has been known to render fairer decisions, and sterner sanctions. GMA should know. That was how she became president.

Second, and infinitely more positively, FPJ gave this country a touch of class. Unfortunately, that would be known only after he died. FPJ's head might not always have been in the right place, but his heart was. Having had to claw his way to the top (his father died and left his company in shambles; he started out in the movies as a stunt man), he never forgot his less fortunate brethren. Even more wonderfully, he did not keep reminding the world of it. He bade his friends to never talk about his acts of generosity, even shunning the thought during the campaign. Before he died, he had collected a cache of relief goods to give to the storm victims of Quezon. They were unmarked. They did not carry the sign, "Handog sa inyo ni Da King," or "Another project of Da King." It struck a contrast with the way an illusory President advertised her even more illusory generosity at every turn.

It isn't true, as Mark Anthony told the Roman mob, that only the evil that men do lives after them, the good is interred with their bones. The good that FPJ has done looks headed to stand time.

In the end, he did give the *masa* something to hope for, which sublimely ironically was not that they could always be saved by a savior, which his movies tended to suggest. He gave them something to hope for in life by his life and death. The real hope, it said, was how you lived and died. You could live dishonorably and die in shame, or you could live honestly and die with dignity. His admirers will probably think that qualifies him for man for all seasons.

I'd settle for Filipino of the Year.

KC rains down blessings

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

LAST Tuesday evening Speaker and Mrs. Jose de Venecia commemorated the 40th day of their daughter KC's death, and invited friends and relatives, led by President Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Cory Aquino, to a Mass celebrated at the Pink Sisters' Convent. Afterwards they hosted a dinner at the sprawling Vera Perez Gardens on Valencia Street, Quezon City, which seemed more like a happy debutante's party rather than an occasion for somber remembrance. Sixteen doves were released into the sky and one of them seemed hesitant to fly away, prompting KC's family and friends to cry out, "Fly, KC, fly." Then, with KC's huge photo smiling in the background, family friends Cocoy Laurel, KC's *ninong*, and Martin Nievera wowed guests with an evening of songs. They pulled the De Venecia couple, their son Christopher, Gina's children, Ipe and Carissa Cruz and her sister, Bechay Nakpil, to join in.

* * *

It was a beautiful moonlit night for emotions, but afterwards, the Speaker told me that the KC De Venecia Foundation, which they set up after her death, chaired by Christopher, now has about P4 million. One of its programs will be to fund the scholarship of painters and scientists, in accordance with KC's "obsession" in life to help them. They are starting with five scholars this coming school year. Another program is to sponsor beds in hospitals in key cities for burn victims, starting with two to five beds at the Philippine General Hospital. JDV pointed out that a day's hospital confinement for severely burned victims could run up to P50,000.

* * *

JDV also revealed that, thanks to GMA, House appropriations committee chair Rep. Rolando Andaya, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Senate finance committee chair Sen. Manny Villar, the amount of P35 million has been allocated in the 2005 budget for the purchase of at least one asbestos suit with gas mask and oxygen tank for each of more than 100 cities and towns in the country. These asbestos suits will enable the fire department in those places to rescue babies, hospital patients and the elderly during fires.

From heaven, KC doubtless was smiling that night, for her death, which has so deeply affected her family, has borne much fruit for others. I was reminded of what the Bible said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls down and dies, it will not bear fruit."

* * *

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno has said that if his agency fails to meet its target under the new "Lateral Attrition Law," he'll resign to make room for someone who can do the job. But this may not be the wisest move. For apart from demoralizing the personnel, the resignation of its chief would divert it from the main problem, which is, to look into the reasons for the decline in its tax collection efforts. BIR and Customs records indicate that the tax revenue to GDP ratio rose to 14 percent in 2003 from 13.4 percent in 2002, but this is still a long way from the ratio of 17 percent during the Ramos years—a feather in the cap of then BIR Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons Chato.

* * *

One reason for the drop could be the poor performance of business. It remains to be seen just how much increase in revenue this new system of rewards and punishments for the revenue agencies will bring. And will it curb corruption among their personnel? Some BIR people have been open in the media about their demoralization over the fact that revenue targets are set by another government agency without even consulting the BIR, and yet it's the BIR people who'll be punished if these are not met. Will the financial rewards for meeting targets lift their morale?

* * *

Everyone's talking revenue generation, and not least among them Senate President Drilon, who has proposed to the President some administrative measures to help raise revenues. One proposal is that taxpayers who must pay annual registration or license fees to such agencies as the LTO or the Professional Regulatory Commission be encouraged to pay, say, five years in advance. Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima pointed out that 200,000 vehicles are registered every year at an average fee of P2,500 per vehicle, bringing in an estimated P500 million per year. His proposal, said Drilon, would immediately bring in an additional P2 billion this year and every year thereafter, without increasing the rate. This will also reduce the business of fixers.

* * *

Drilon also urged GMA to order that all entities doing business with and securing licenses from the government, such as contractors, borrowers, service providers, etc., be required to submit income tax returns and BIR-audited financial statements as a condition for the award of contracts or licenses. He noted that businessmen often maintain two sets of financial books, one for the BIR and another stating the real condition of their company. He proposed that the Monetary Board compel all banks to process loan applications and base approval of amounts on financial statements audited by tax authorities, and not on the secret books. He said this would surely minimize tax evasion among businessmen.

* * *

Drilon noted that then Sen. Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Serge Osmeña and he filed bills to this effect in the Senate, but the lobby of the banking sector, "particularly in the House," doomed passage of the law. He said Governor Rafael Buenaventura is resisting its implementation by the MB, but if GMA supports this scheme, the MB could adopt the necessary resolution.

This scheme is good, as *walang kawala ang* loan applicants. GMA has seen fit to adopt Drilon's proposals; in fact, she has directed Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong to make representations with the MB to adopt the proposal to use BIR-certified ITRs and financial statements and not the "secret books" as basis for determining the credit worthiness of loan applicants and their ability to pay.

Auschwitz 60 years ago

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

IF you have "Schindler's List," "The Pianist" or other Holocaust movies in your collection you might like to watch one again today. If you have Holocaust books, behold the photographs or immerse yourself in the survivors' accounts. Today is the 60th anniversary of the liberation of prisoners in the German Nazi concentration camps in Auschwitz, Poland.

Thousands will be flocking to Auschwitz today, among them world leaders and monarchs, to remember the more than three million people, the majority of them Jews, who were mass murdered mostly in the gas chambers there and in other death camps in Europe.

The European Jews were the primary victims of the Nazis. According to a Holocaust website, in 1933 nine million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that would be occupied by Germany during World War II. By 1945, two out of every three European Jews had been killed.

But the Jews were not the only group on Hitler's hate list. So were 500,000 million Gypsies, 250,000 mentally or physically disabled, more than three million Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Social Democrats, Communists, partisans, trade unionists and Polish intelligentsia.

Auschwitz's three main camps saw the biggest mass killings by gas: almost 1.5 million from 1940 to 1945. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, historians estimate that among the people sent to Auschwitz were at least 1.1 million Jews from all the countries in Nazi-occupied Europe, over 140,000 Poles who were mostly political prisoners, some 20,000 Gypsies from several European countries, over 10,000 Soviet prisoners of war and over 10,000 of other nationalities. The majority of the Jewish deportees were sent to the gas chambers to die as soon as they arrived.

It is sickening to know that there are neo-Nazi diehards now espousing the cause to deny that the Holocaust ever happened. They are very much in the league of those who are trying to prove that the moon landing was a hoax, that it was staged in the Arizona desert. On second thought, these Holocaust deniers are a league of their own. I can live with a moon landing hoax theory, but not with a brazen attempt to obliterate the historical fact of 6 million people mass murdered because they belonged to a certain race or were simply different.

Auschwitz in Poland, more than Dachau, Bergen-Belsen and other concentration camps in Germany, has become known as a symbol of terror and genocide. It was established by Hitler's Nazis in 1940, a year before they embarked on the so-called *Endlosung der Jugenfrage* or "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" (euphemism for mass extermination, by the way).

Annexed by the Nazis to the Third Reich, Oswiecim was renamed Auschwitz. It was at the center of German-occupied Europe and therefore people could easily be sent there. Auschwitz prisoners were used in synthetic rubber, fuel and military plants. It later became the biggest of all death camps.

The local populace of Poles and Jews living near Auschwitz III were driven out of their homes. Many homes were demolished, others were assigned to officers and their families.

In the beginning, Auschwitz was just for the "dangerous" Poles: the elite and the intelligentsia, the artists and the scientists and those in the resistance movement, the likes, perhaps, of Karol Wojtyla. Later, the Nazis sent in their prisoners from other countries. Many died there as a result of starvation, disease, torture and criminal medical experiments.

Dr. Joseph Mengele did many of his experiments there: surgeries without anesthesia, blood transfusions, isolation endurance, sex-change operations, injection of lethal germs, incestuous impregnations, limb removals. He was fanatical about identical twins and dissected them meticulously.

In a 1995 signed statement, Nazi doctor Hans Munch recounted how he witnessed the selection process on who was to live and who was to die. "Children and old people, the sick and those unable to work were sent to the gas chambers. These were innocent human beings. Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Hitler's political opponents-anyone who did not fit Hitler's idea of a pure Aryan race.

"I, a former SS physician, witnessed the dropping of Zyklon B into simulated exhaust vents from outside the gas chamber. Zyklon began to work as soon as it was released from the canisters. The effects of the gas were observed through a peephole by an assigned doctor or the SS officer on duty. After three to five minutes, death could be certified, and the doors were opened as a sign that the corpses were cleared to be burned.

"This is a nightmare I continue to live with 50 years later. I am so sorry that in some way I was part of it. Under the prevailing circumstances, I did the best I could to save as many lives as possible. Joining the SS was a mistake. I was young. I was on opportunist. And once I joined, there was no way out."

While many brave individuals and families risked their lives to help Jews escape genocide, only one man, Oscar Schindler, succeeded in getting Jews out of Auschwitz on the pretext that they were his workers and by bribing the Nazis. He spent millions, all he possessed, to save "his Jews." Schindler died poor.

With the Soviet Army advancing, the Auschwitz officials started destroying documents and evidence of their crimes. They evacuated prisoners in mid-January of 1945. The able-bodied were marched out in columns by the German guards. Many died in the "Death March" and the few thousands who were left behind in prison were liberated on Jan. 27, 1945.

We must know and remember.

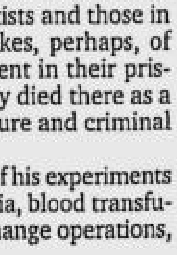
* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Remembering

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



TODAY marks the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, one of the most notorious of the Nazi concentration camps. Ten years ago, when I first wrote in commemoration of the anniversary, very few Filipinos knew of the Holocaust or what it meant for humanity. Since then, the story of the Nazi's attempts to liquidate all of Europe's Jews has become well known to Filipinos. Movies such as "Schindler's List," which was briefly in danger of not being shown because of the MTRCB's prudishness over the explicit portrayal of concentration camp indignities, and "The Pianist" have left many Filipinos moved and touched by the stories about the suffering of the Jews.

The hateful, poisonous vision of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, contemporary Filipinos might think, is far removed from their lives. If the means used by Rwandan officials, who studied the Nazis and consciously used their tactics and sometimes even their terminology to turn one tribe against another, resulting in one of the most horrifying mass murders in recent history, isn't enough, then our own experience under the Japanese and under martial law should convince them.

There are still many Filipinos who recall the horrors of World War II, in particular the cruelty of the Japanese. There are many more Filipinos who suffered imprisonment, torture and rape and are still around to bear witness to what Filipino cruelty, again inspired at times by the Nazis, was like. There were hundreds who died because of martial law, and millions more who were victimized by its methods of propaganda plagiarized from Hitler's Germany.

Six million Jews died because of their race and religion. They were identified as peddlers of Marxism-Leninism and corruptors of society because of their prominence in the economy and the arts. The guilt German society wrestles with to this day stems from the transformation of their society from one known for its culture and learning to one in which the many averted their eyes to state-sponsored euthanasia, repression and the murder of minorities from Jews, to Gypsies, to homosexuals. The result was a nation that eagerly embraced the concept of waging aggressive war for political and economic ends, which celebrated the destruction of democracy, and which embraced the politics of blame and hate. The Filipino who hates another Filipino, because of the latter's religion or race, or stands aside when discrimination is proposed or practiced, is guilty of the same cowardice and active collaboration that the German World War II generation suffers from to this day.

Speaking before the US Congress in 1968, Martin Niemoeller, a pastor in the German Confessing Church, said: "When Hitler attacked the Jews I was not a Jew, therefore I was not concerned. And when Hitler attacked the Catholics, I was not a Catholic, and therefore, I was not concerned. And when Hitler attacked the unions and industrialists, I was not a member of the unions and I was not concerned. Then, Hitler attacked me and the Protestant church—and there was nobody left to be concerned."

This statement found particular resonance among those who opposed martial law, because of how eerily similar the martial law experience was to what had happened to Germany. This statement should find a continuing resonance among us, even if an increasing number of Filipinos have never met a Jew, or read of Hitler, or experienced life during martial law. The politics of division and hate, of "us" against "them," that feeds on hatred and resentment of other people because of the color of their skin, the God they choose to worship, the politics they practice or the type of persons they choose to love, is one that found its most horrible expression in Germany but also bloodily attempted in Rwanda, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Vietnam, and, yes, the Philippines.

There are some Filipinos who have heard of, and read, the works of Hannah Arendt. She was a political theorist who, upon watching the trial of Adolf Eichmann, an SS lieutenant colonel responsible for the transport of Jews to the concentration camps, was struck by how utterly unremarkable he seemed to be, how banal. Far from being a crazed, obviously monstrous man, Arendt said, Eichmann represented what she came to call "the banality of evil": how great wrongs can be perpetrated by people who are so much like ourselves.

She went further—controversially so, as one scholar, Stephen Whitefield, explains it: "Almost in passing, she also claimed that fewer than six million Jews would have died if the Jewish councils had not collaborated to various degrees with Nazis like Eichmann. Even anarchy and noncooperation would have been better, she stated, than the effort to act as though the occupiers were traditional anti-Semites who might somehow be bribed or appeased. Her attribution of some responsibility for the catastrophe to the councils (Judenräte) not only met sharp criticism, but also provoked a considerable historical literature that investigated the behavior of Jewish communities under Nazi occupation. The subsequent debate has often reinforced the picture of venality, delusion, fear, and selfishness that Arendt briefly presented."

Why are so many willing to live with, and under, a hateful system? And why do so many seem to go willingly to their deaths without revolting on the way to—or in—prison? The answers may be found in a film and a book. The film is "The Grey Zone," about the only attempt by the imprisoned in Auschwitz to revolt, and the book is "Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps" by Tzvetan Todorov (available at A Different Bookstore). You must watch the movie and read the book. They are tough going, but your humanity requires it. If only so that you, too, can remember what cannot be forgotten.

Sign pen monologue

YOUNG BLOOD

Juan Carlo N. Ang

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I AM Carlo's sign pen, and I have finally been given the chance to speak out.

I am just an ordinary sign pen, a regular Pilot Hi-Tecpoint V-5 model, which can be purchased at any bookstore for a red paper bill, with a few coins for change (sorry, I don't understand human currency). When Carlo took me off the shelf and drew a few lines with me, I knew it was destiny. Why he picked me over thousands of my brothers and sisters, who are far more perfect than me, will forever remain a mystery to me. Even when Carlo had his own arsenal, he considered me as his best weapon. I was his, and nobody else's.

I've been with Carlo through the toughest days of his life. I've written with him when he emerged victorious from his battles. It was me who got him through his first love letter. It was me who got wet with his tears whenever he made a eulogy about a dead compatriot, which was quite often given the average life span of humans. It was me who tried to maintain stability when Carlo's hand shook during his exams. I'm proud to say that Carlo never failed a quiz when he had me at his fingertips.

Right now, Carlo's spirit is roaming somewhere, while I sit here. He is using a cousin of mine to write this down. From time to time, I can feel my cousin tremble and squirm with jealousy; after all, not many noncarbon-based organisms can get a human being's permission to use his body. As you read this, you might feel a slight vibration in your pockets or in your bags or maybe in your shelves and desktops. Those are my brethren, screaming for a chance to speak out, for an opportunity to be heard.

If I had a choice, I'd go back to my original body (which is lying beside me right now). Who'd want to be in this pathetic excuse for a body (I'm sorry Carlo, but you know it's true) anyway? This body is ravaged by traces of human vices, and fatigued by Carlo's passion for public service. Its nucleus (which you have promptly labeled as the brain) is so stressed out with all the problems of human life, its visual rectification system has become dysfunctional after trying to read in pitch-dark conditions, its exoskeleton is scarred with countless lines and wounds from previous battles, and its sound-scanning mechanisms have almost been obliterated by the sounds of heavy gunfire and the noise of modern heavy metal "music."

But what choice do I have? I have to use a human body. This spiritual transport system is built for communication through thousands of years of organic evolution. These organic fibers (the ones you call muscles) inside this body can do a wealth of things, including creating vibrations to produce sound, transportation and locomotion, and, most important, writing.

Don't think that my original body is useless. If you, clueless humans, don't know it yet, a writing tool's body is equipped with countless sensory organelles. Whenever you hold us in your hand, countless sensors in our body can sense every bit of organic fiber contraction and relaxation, every pulse, every shake and every nerve impulse. We know what you are thinking the moment you think of it. We know the things you want to write the moment it sprouts out of your nucleus. We know. And you can't even begin to imagine what I know about Carlo.

Most of my brethren have a single wish: to be human. We always want to know how it feels like to exist, to be remembered, to be cherished by other individuals, to love. I had that same wish, too, until Carlo held me in his hand. Then I learned that being human wasn't as nice as I thought it was.

I also learned Carlo's wish. He wished he was a sign pen—just like me. He longed to escape the unending problems of everyday life. He grew sick and tired of hiding behind fake smiles. He grew sick and tired of hiding behind a façade of happiness, stability and invulnerability, just so he can live out another day of torture and misery. He was unhappy, not because he didn't have the ability to make changes, but because he knew that he had that gift in him and yet he kept on failing. He didn't know what he had to do to make his life meaningful.

But Carlo knew what it was like to be a sign pen. My brethren and I are born as soon as we are injected with ink. We get transported here and there until a human needs us. He uses us until we run out of ink, and then he throws us away. We know our goals, objectives and destiny from the moment we began to exist. When a nuclear catastrophe comes and destroys all of you, we will remain. When the sun expands to become a red giant after thousands of years and wipes out life from this earth, we will remain. We never feel sadness and frustration. We never feel pain. We are immortal.

But humans, you had to suffer and cry the moment you came out of another human being. You have to search endlessly for the meaning of your existence. You have to use, or be used. You have to feel pain. You have to suffer the pangs of guilt, betrayal, sorrow, loneliness and all other pathetic human emotions.

So why do I have to write about this? Because I want to tell Carlo that he's wrong. You humans are so lucky that you are mortal. How I wish I were human. Being human means that you know your mortality well, and because of it, you strive to be the best you can be for you know that you might not exist tomorrow.

Being human means that you have the power, wisdom and strength to make things better, for you and for all the things you hold dear.

Being human means that you get to choose your own destiny.

Being human means getting the chance to be happy.

To be human is to know the fear of death, yet keep on fighting.

Carlo, as soon as your spirit comes back, I pray to all the gods that you would take your time to read this. You shouldn't rue your humanity. Remember that line in a movie you really liked? "What doesn't kill you will make you stronger."

You are lucky. There aren't many of you who are gifted with the courage and strength to make something out of your short lives. Make the most out of your luck. Remember, true happiness doesn't mean that everything in the world is perfect; it simply means that everything in the world sucks, and you're doing just fine.

I think I have written enough. However, I feel a certain feeling, a good feeling. I guess this is what you humans call "satisfaction." Carlo, if you have gotten this far, I thank you, with all my plastic and all my ink, for taking time to read what I had to write. Remember, no matter how many times you fall down, no matter how many friends you lose in the fight against injustice, I'll always be here. I am more than just your friend. I am your sign pen.

Juan Carlo N. Ang, 17, is a business management junior at Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan de Oro City, a student leader, freelance writer and an activist at heart.

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Breastfeeding for survival

I WAS alarmed to hear that the No. 1 consumer commodity in the Philippines in 2004 was infant formula. In a country where access to safe water is limited, and where 26.5 million persons live in poverty, the high consumption of infant formula is a death sentence to thousands of infants. An infant not exclusively breastfed in the first two months of life is up to 25 times more likely to die from diarrhea and four times more likely to die from pneumonia than a breastfed baby; growth and development may stall and the child stands a greater risk of suffering increased obesity, heart disease and gastrointestinal problems in later years.

The long-term impact of poor feeding practices in infancy and early childhood includes poor school performance, reduced productivity and impaired intellectual and social development.

Only breast milk provides ideal nutrition and health protection for infants in the first six months of life. It has all the nutrients, antibodies, hormones, immune factors and antioxidants an infant needs to thrive. It protects babies from diarrhea and acute respiratory infections and stimulates their immune systems. Furthermore, children breastfed in infancy have higher IQs than their formula-fed counterparts.

Breastfeeding is also economical. Breast milk is free (whereas infant formula is expensive). And it does not require bottles, artificial nipples, sterilization and clean water.

The United Nation's Children's Fund (Unicef) and World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age, and continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding up to two years and beyond. But in the Philippines, infants are exclusively breastfed for an average of only 24 days.

Unicef estimates that if every baby in the world were exclusively breastfed from birth to six months, 1.3 million lives would be saved every year.

When the Baguio General Hospital stopped purchasing infant formula and compelled all mothers to breastfeed, the incidence of infant diarrhea dropped by 94 percent, while the number of deaths due to infection plummeted by 95 percent.

The National Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplements and Related Products, which was signed into law in 1986, needs to be strictly implemented. The code bans the use of the health care system for the promotion of infant formula and other related products; bans donations, samples and other giveaways by milk companies to health workers and the general public; requires special labels for infant formula; requires intensified training of health workers; and regulates advertisements of products covered by the code.

Unicef is prepared to assist the Philippine government, NGOs and private sector to more stringently monitor the implementation of the Breastmilk Code, train health professionals and intensify public education.

—DR. NICHOLAS ALIPUI,
country representative
to the Philippines,
United Nations
Children's Fund (Unicef),
RCBC Plaza,
Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Dead faith?

IN EVERY major catastrophe, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most European countries almost always respond immediately. Sadly, the Vatican state is seldom there to be counted, despite of its huge resources.

I read in a Reader's Digest article that the Vatican is the world's richest state with billions and billions of dollars just lying idle in its vault. What is this wealth for if not used to eradicate poverty, or to fund medical research to prolong life and eliminate diseases, or to pursue programs promoting peace and harmony? Is it not written in the Bible that you cannot love God and the Mammon or serve two masters at the same time?

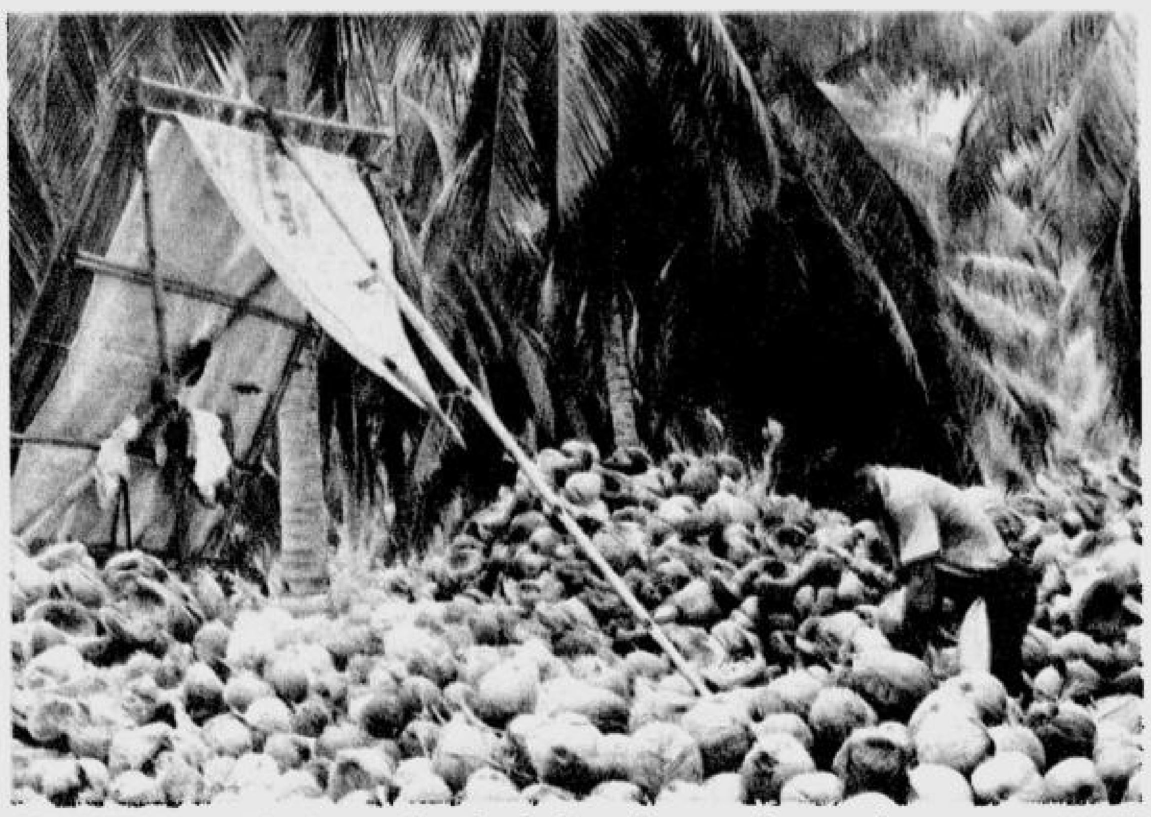
Our country has gone through so much misery and hardship, so many calamities such as the Pinatubo eruption, the Ormoc flash floods, the recent Aurora, Quezon, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan landslides and mudflows, but I have yet to hear how the Vatican has responded to all this. Except with lip service, like prayers and expressions of sympathy and solidarity.

The Holy Father constantly prays for peace and prosperity yet we remain a world torn by wars and mired in abject poverty. In the Philippines, thousands of Masses and prayers are said every day, especially for our leaders, but corruption goes on. The funny thing is the Church hierarchy imposes so many burdens on the faithful but hardly lifts a finger in times of disasters. Isn't faith without deeds dead?

Are church leaders the children of God or masters of deception and hypocrisy, experts only in the business of accumulating material wealth (through Masses, sacraments, sponsorships, solicitations, donations, offerings, etc.), too often in violation of biblical injunctions?

I beg the Catholic world to follow the teachings of the Bible.

—DELFIN M. QUIAMBAO JR.,
Poblacion San Nicolas,
Concepcion, Tarlac



COCONUT farmer: rightful owner of coco levy funds remains among the country's poorest. PDI PHOTO

Farmers' SMC shares, more than 27 percent

PRESS Secretary Ignacio Bunye was reported to have categorically denied that the government was planning to sell "its" shares in San Miguel Corp. Before that, talks were rife that Malacañang was keen on disposing 27 percent of SMC shares, amounting to P50 billion, to raise additional funds for the cash-strapped government.

But the shares, as declared by the Sandiganbayan, were bought with coco levy funds. Many small coconut farmers feel that the government's motive in siding with them in the recovery of the funds is self-serving. In fact, farmers now believe that, sooner or later, despite Secretary Bunye's denials, the government will proceed with the sale to cover part of the budget deficit.

The 27 percent SMC shares must be used solely for the improvement of the coconut industry and to uplift the lives of millions of impoverished, small coconut farmers. We hail the Presidential Commission on Good Government for its unwavering effort in recovering these shares for the coconut farmers. But the task to completely recover the whole block of SMC shares due the farmers has yet to be realized. The farmers, through the PCGG, have yet to win the case involving the remaining 20 percent shares also bought with coco levy funds. This is still being contested by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

But why is President Macapagal-Arroyo silent on the 20 percent SMC shares? Why is Malacañang not pursuing the case on these shares? Is it because Malacañang is assuming that the 20 percent actually belongs to Cojuangco? Is there an arrangement between the government and Cojuangco? Are there plans to resurrect the old compromise agreement? Why is the Cojuangco camp singing a different tune now? Cojuangco's lawyer Estelito Mendoza said that Cojuangco never actually claimed the 27 percent SMC shares. If that were the case, why did he lay claim on those shares in the first place?

The 20 percent (being claimed by Cojuangco) was also acquired using coco levy funds.

Malacañang must also go after this block of shares.

The government would do well to heed the demand of the country's small coconut farmers for the full recovery of the 47 percent SMC shares of stock that were bought with coco levy funds. At a time when most of them are on the brink of starvation, the recovery of the whole 47 percent block has never been as urgent.

—OMI ROYANDOYAN,
executive director,
Philippine Peasant Institute,
Rm. 319 PSSC Bldg.,
Commonwealth Ave.,
Diliman, Quezon City

The President's duty

THE INDIFFERENCE and stubbornness of the Cojuangco-Aquino clan to sit down and face the leaders of United Luisita Workers' Union (Ulwu) and Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) across the negotiating table, and its failed attempts to silence our ranks by way of violence, are an apparent indication that the family is in no gear to settle the Hacienda Luisita workers' demands for just wages and benefits.

The continued inaction and deliberate disregard by the Arroyo regime of the deceitful and violent disposition of the Cojuangco-Aquino clan relative to the Hacienda Luisita labor issue nourish the clan's obstinacy not to grant the simple demands of the mill and farmworkers in the hacienda.

President Macapagal-Arroyo should take notice and reconsider her treatment of the issue to genuinely address and resolve the problem of over 20,000 workers of Hacienda Luisita. She could do this only if she would give time and listen to her constituents.

The President should understand that she is obliged to resolve the people's clamor for justice, political and economic emancipation.

With the growing agrarian and industrial unrest in the country, this is her last and available option to show to the country that for once she cares to do something right by her people.

Or else, she will inevitably face the 20,000 Hacienda Luisita workers, along with the millions of oppressed and repressed Filipino masses, seeking justice and emancipation, who, in their collective wisdom and strength, might drive her out of Malacañang.

—RICARDO RAMOS,
president,
Central Azucarera de Tarlac
Labor Union (Catlu),
Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac City

Mostly frontal wounds

WE are writing in reaction to the front-page news item "Luisita farmer accuses Noynoy's supporters" bylined under Michael Lim Ubac. (PDI, 1/13/05)

While the article was well-written as a whole, we would like to clarify a glaring error that has significantly altered the complexion of our statement. In a paragraph under the subheading "Deliberate, intentional," I was quoted to have allegedly stated that "all of the gunshot wounds (by the casualties) were frontal except for two." This is the exact opposite of what I said and what was written in the report that we furnished Ubac himself.

The report states that "Except for two gunshot wounds, both of which were sustained by Laza, none of the 10 gunshot wounds of the other casualties were frontal. All of the entry wounds were either from the back or from the sides." Similarly, in the executive summary of the said report (a copy of which we also furnished Ubac), it is very clearly written that "none except two GSW [gunshot wounds] were frontal."

The error is significant in the sense that it changed not only the tenor of our statements but also erroneously attributed to us a statement we never made.

—GENE ALZONA
NISPEROS, M.D.,
secretary general,
Health Alliance for Democracy
(HEAD), 2/F La Paloma Bldg.,
233 Mayon St.,
Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City

CONTRARY to Dr. Nisperos' claim, the "error" he attributed to me did not change the complexity and meaning of the story. He should have also looked at the larger picture that the story conveyed: the wounds inflicted on the sugar farmers were "deliberate and intentional"; "the shooting did not occur as a 'defensive stance or because the PNP or AFP were provoked but rather as a direct armed offensive assault on the picket,'"; and "there was also clear excessive force." These quotes were lifted verbatim from the executive summary of the medical report submitted to the Senate.

—MICHAEL LIM UBAC,
PDI reporter

Investment challenges for the Philippines

COMMENTARY

Tom Crouch

THE PHILIPPINES has a lot going for it. It has concerned, committed and competent economic managers; there is a raft of essentially sound economic, social, environmental and regulatory legislation on the books; appropriate institutions have been established; the workforce is educated, entrepreneurial and eager; nature's gifts are in abundance; traditional Filipino friendliness is everywhere.

Yet, compared with its neighbors (even compared with itself not so long ago), the country has fared short of expectations on the platform of economic performance. Relative to other economies in Southeast Asia, the Philippines' performance has been lackluster in several respects, including growth in per capita income, which has been one of the region's lowest in the last decade, and even negative during 1981-1990. While almost all the other economies that suffered from the 1997 East Asian financial crisis have greatly recovered, the Philippines' labor productivity and investment indexes have stalled. For example, despite recently surprisingly strong economic growth, gross domestic investment declined from about 24 percent of the economy's output in 1997 to just over 17 percent in 2003, and foreign direct investment dropped from a high of $1.8 billion in 1999 to $0.2 billion in 2003.

Why? What makes the Philippines less productive and less globally competitive in a region that has been characterized as "tiger-like" in economic performance? To an important extent, the answer lies in matters related to an investment climate that has limited incentives for more capital formation, faster productivity improvements and better competitiveness. By taking concrete steps to improve the investment incentive framework—and that doesn't mean a slew of tax breaks for business—the Philippines can unshackle itself from these constraints and move more rapidly toward its vision of a country free of poverty.

A recent survey (conducted by the Asian Development Bank in collaboration with the World Bank) on investment climate and productivity interviewed chief operations officers, human resource managers and financial managers from 716 randomly selected establishments in major industrial areas covering four major manufacturing sectors—food and food processing, garments, textiles and electronics. The survey confirms that the Philippines has some catching-up to do in three areas that determine the attractiveness of the investment climate: macroeconomic stability, governance and infrastructure.

The survey found that 40 percent of the respondents consider weak macroeconomic fundamentals as a major constraint to doing business in the Philippines. This broad factor includes things such as the fiscal imbalance, competitive markets for productive inputs and outputs, level of interest rates and social and political stability. With the national government's debt at about 78 percent of Gross Domestic Product, and total public sector debt at 138 percent of GDP in 2003, respondents perceive the government as having a weak grasp in managing the economy. The debt statistics are the flip side of weak revenue generation, whereby expenditures have had to be financed by borrowings. Consequently, in the public sector, expenditures for maintenance and new investments have been compressed. This, in turn, has eroded the attractiveness for new private investment. In addition, the fiscal imbalance and associated debt issues, accompanied by perceptions of country risks for lenders, have raised interest rates, increasing the cost of borrowing.

The survey indicates that just as problematic for investors is corruption. Thirty-four percent of responding firms ranked corruption as a severe constraint to doing business. Transactions at the Bureau of Customs are perceived to be problematic for a large number of firms—more than 50 percent of exporting and foreign firms surveyed finding customs administration as a moderate to major obstacle to business. Another commonplace cost of doing business is the pattern of informal payments or gift-giving to government officials in securing regulatory permits and licenses.

Investments are attracted to areas with adequate roads, ports and other essential infrastructure. How does the Philippines fare in this aspect? About 62 percent of the firms surveyed rate public infrastructure and services in the Philippines as "somewhat inefficient to very inefficient." Poor shipping services, for example, led to a 4.7 percent loss in production compared to a 2.2 percent loss in Indonesia and to just 1 percent in Bangladesh and China.

Public works (roads) in the Philippines appear as one of the most unsatisfactory in the region. Approximately 54 percent of respondents consider it to be a problem. Although this is comparable with India's (69 percent) and Bangladesh's (49 percent), it is far higher than the 20-percent rating for China and Malaysia.

Can the Philippines catch up with its neighbors, whose economic performance indicators—including investment—are often better than the Philippines? The short answer is "yes." The caveat is "with concerted effort."

For example, the productivity study shows that if the overall investment climate could be improved to a level equivalent with that in the Philippines' special economic zones (SEZs), then labor productivity of firms could double. While part of the higher productivity of firms in SEZs might relate to their special characteristics, an appreciable extent is considered to be due to the superior investment climate. This does not mean that SEZs should be set up all over the country. It does mean, however, that SEZs provide insights into the importance of the quality of infrastructure, simpler regulatory systems, and availability of skilled labor and ready access to finance. The SEZs provide examples of best practice, which can be replicated; they are evidence that things can be done right, with commensurate returns.

Urgent action to move the Philippines to a higher, sustainable growth path is needed to make serious progress in reducing poverty. More investment is an important ingredient. A conducive investment climate is a necessary—albeit not sufficient—condition for this. The time has come for moving beyond diagnosis and prescription to concrete action. The process of addressing constraints relating to the fiscal imbalance, poor governance and inadequate infrastructure has begun. The Philippines has in place a solid base that can be leveraged to reap the returns it so richly deserves. Delay is the enemy of success in this important adventure.

Tom Crouch is the director of the Asian Development Bank's Philippines country office.

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Mining areas seen likely battlegrounds of NPA, Army

TARLAC CITY—Areas in Central Luzon covered by financial or technical assistance agreements (FTAA) issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to mining companies are potential battlegrounds between communist rebels and the military.

This loomed on Monday as the New People's Army announced that it would "undertake its own way of protecting the environment, particularly against open pit mining."

But Environment Secretary Michael Defensor appealed to the rebels to "really serve the people and help uplift the conditions of communities by allowing responsible mining" even in areas where they have influence.

In an interview in Nueva Ecija, Jose Agtalon, spokesperson of the NPA's Josefino Corpuz Command, said the recent Supreme Court decision allowing foreigners to own mining ventures in the country would further worsen the environmental degradation in Central Luzon.

Open pit

Agtalon said open pit mining, for instance, would mean further forest denudation and soil erosion. He cited two mining firms that had been allowed by the DENR to operate open pit mining between Pampanga and Zambales, and white clay mining in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

Agtalon said they would prevent further destruction of the environment and depletion of mineral resources in the region, through "intensified revolutionary actions." He said most of the FTAA areas are "within the guerrilla zones."

He said NPA rebels would confiscate and burn equipment used in mining operations.

Asked if areas covered by FTAAs would likely become battle zones, Agtalon said, "*Hindi natin maiiwasan na magkaganun na 'yon* (We cannot avoid it)."

With the new vigor given to mining operations, Agtalon said his group foresees a massive displacement of communities in mining areas.

Defiance

He said, however, this would be met with defiance by the communities.

On Sunday, Defensor appealed to the NPA to allow the mining operations. "If they (rebels) really want to serve the people, they should allow people in their areas of influence to have jobs and livelihood. They should allow (mining operators) to undertake their operations," he told reporters here.

He said he would require mining companies to undertake "responsible mining" and "to really help improve the lives of the people ... and to protect the environment."

Companies that would not comply with the order would lose their permits, he said.

Mining companies are expected to pour in $6 billion worth of investments within the next six years.

The communist rebels and government soldiers have been accusing each other of protecting logging syndicates.

The rebels had been accused of tolerating illegal logging in exchange for the payment of revolutionary taxes by the logging operators. *Jo Martinez-Clemente, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Lapid says 'unearned income' from quarrying not plunder

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LAPID

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Unearned income does not constitute plunder, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid said on Wednesday as he parried allegations of pocketing public funds from revenues out of Mt. Pinatubo's sand.

"How can I be accused of plunder for unearned income?" Lapid asked in reaction to Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao's claim that millions of pesos in quarry revenues had been lost to corruption.

Guiao, in a privilege speech at the provincial board on Monday, did not mention the amount he claimed to have been stolen from quarry revenues.

He cited, though, the "glaring discrepancies" in the revenues generated by the state-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. and the provincial capitol from 1999 to 2001 and from 2002 to 2004.

The differences amounted to an average of P100 million annually, indicating large disparities in the number of truckloads of sand that were taxed.

As during the NRDC's time, the provincial capitol levies a tax of P300 per truckload. Former Provincial Treasurer Jovito Sabado, in a reply to a Commission on Audit team that performed an audit of quarry revenues from January 1997 to June 1998, said an average of 2,500 trucks haul sand from Pampanga daily.

Guiao held Lapid and his son, Gov. Mark Lapid, accountable for the drop in revenues. The elder Lapid chaired the provincial quarry task force during his three terms as governor starting in 1995. His son took over in July 2004.

Guiao quoted the senator as saying that he "cannot be faulted" for the low income. "That's the failure of the provincial treasurer, not the governor," Guiao said.

The Sandiganbayan last year cleared Lapid, Sabado and two more respondents in a graft case involving alleged irregularities in the collection of quarry taxes.

Provincial Treasurer Vergel Yabut shunned media interviews.

"I have not made any illegal spending, not even a cent, using capitol money," Guiao quoted Lapid as saying.

The senator also called Guiao an "opportunist" and a "man of no gratitude."

"He never spent a single centavo during the campaign. I financed all of it. Why is he talking so much now?" the senator said of Guiao, the running mate of his son in the May 10, 2004 elections.

To that, Guiao reacted: "This is not personal. *Trabaho lang*. The issue here is corruption. They should answer first why quarry revenues declined at their lowest."

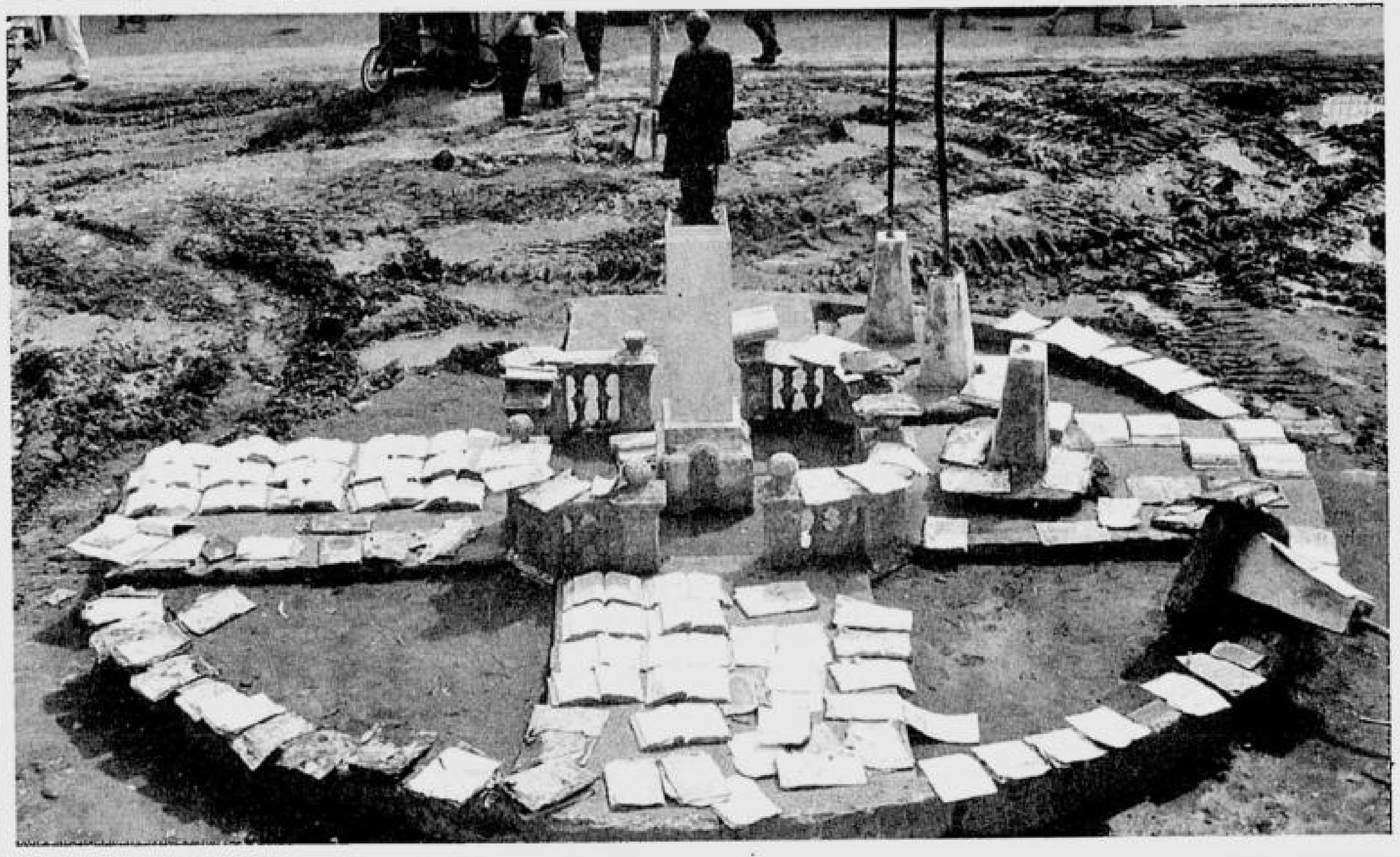
Governor Lapid tried to distance himself from his father or from the whole issue, and asked Guiao to specify his alleged liability.

"I'm just six months in the office. If it concerns my father, let him or his office answer for him," the governor said. Guiao, he claimed, merely referred to "imaginary revenues," or unearned income as the senator wanted to call it.

"My conscience is clear," the younger Lapid told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "I'm doing everything possible to improve the collections."

Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo said he was not siding with anyone yet on the controversy. "That must be proven in court," he said of Guiao's allegations.

But he credited Guiao for "presenting alternatives in improving quarry collections."



PICKING UP PIECES
Residents and officials of Infanta, Quezon dry government documents at a monument for national hero Jose Rizal. The documents were soaked in water when floods hit the town, one of the worst affected by typhoons last year.
DELFIN MALLARI/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Bohol town mayor gets 48 hours to stop takeover

By Chito A. Fuentes and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The impasse on who will rightfully sit as mayor of Batuan town is expected to be resolved on Thursday.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado said he separately talked to Mayor Gregoria Dampog-Pepito and Sixto Dano on Tuesday afternoon in order to seek a resolution to the impasse.

He said he, along with the officials of the Commission on Elections and the Department of Interior and Local Government, would install Dano unless Pepito would be able to secure a temporary restraining order from the Supreme Court.

Accompanying him to Batuan, about 51 km northwest of here, would be acting provincial election officer Veronico Petalcorin and acting DILG provincial chief Louella Lucino.

He added that both agreed to his proposal to give Pepito 48 hours to secure a TRO from the Supreme Court to give her a chance to exhaust legal remedies before Dano was installed in office. The 48 hours would expire on Thursday afternoon.

Peaceful transition

Both Dano and Pepito also committed to a peaceful transition, the governor said.

Dano and Pepito were both allies of the governor, although they ran in two different factions of the administration party in Batuan during the last elections.

Petalcorin, for his part, said there is no more legal obstacle to Dano's assumption as mayor. "There is no more basis for a TRO. It has become moot and academic," he said.

Petalcorin said Pepito could be liable for prolonging herself in power and usurpation of authority if she continues to refuse to turn over the post to Dano.

"As far as we are concerned, the Comelec order (proclaiming Dano) is final and executory," said Lucino.

On Monday, Dano was proclaimed as mayor of Batuan after the Comelec *en banc* affirmed its resolution that Pepito was not qualified to run for mayor in the May 2004 elections because she lacked the residency requirement.

Pepito refused to step down while her lawyers in Manila filed a petition, asking the High Tribunal to issue a restraining order.

Show of support

About 200 supporters of Pepito flocked to the Batuan Municipal Hall to show their support to the beleaguered mayor.

Pepito, for her part, said she would step down unless she would be able to secure a TRO before the arrival of the governor.

"But if I can't get the TRO, then there's no problem ... I am ready to step down today," she added.

But Pepito said that if she will step down, it does not mean that she will no longer contest the post.

She said she will still fight against that ruling of the Comelec before the Supreme Court because she wanted to defend the majority of the people in Batuan who voted for her.

Dano, for his part, said he expected a peaceful and orderly resolution to the deadlock on Thursday.

He said he met with Batuan department heads about 10 a.m. yesterday at the old municipal hall, located beside the new town hall where Pepito is holding office.

"I told him we are back to work," he said in Cebuano. *With reports from Connie Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

N. Ecija town at standstill on 2 'mayors'

CABANATUAN CITY—The municipal government in Pantabangan town is at a virtual standstill for more than a month now because of the unresolved mayoral dispute there.

Two mayors, each claiming he is the legal town executive, report to their offices at the town hall.

The two are incumbent Mayor Lucio Uera, who was proclaimed winner in the May 10, 2004 elections, and Romeo Borja, who was declared by the court winner after he was found to have more votes than Uera.

Records of the Pantabangan mayoral case showed that Uera, who ran for reelection under the Bagong Lakas ng Nueva Ecija (Balane), won by 19 votes over Borja.

Borja, who ran under the Lakas-Christian Democrat, contested the election of Uera before the regional trial court in San Jose City.

Judge Joselito Cruz Villarosa, in his ruling in November last year, declared that Borja won by 200 votes.

Villarosa issued a writ of execution Dec. 10. But Uera refused to step down, saying he had appealed the decision at the Commission on Elections.

Uera holds office on the second floor of the town hall while Borja holds office on the first floor of the building.

More than 100 regular employees of the town have not received their salaries as no one would like to sign their payroll and disburse money from the town's coffers. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

2 DPWH projects near completion

THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said two key infrastructure projects in Agusan del Sur would be finished soon.

Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez, in a press statement, said the second Magsaysay Bridge and the Butuan City bypass road are on their way to completion.

The second Magsaysay Bridge will provide an alternate route and ease the crippling traffic congestion in the heart of Butuan City and along the existing Magsaysay Bridge, which itself is awaiting much needed repair.

"Like any emerging metropolis, the city is now burdened with a worsening traffic situation aggravated by a limited road network ...," Soriquez said.

The two projects were started in May last year and came following clashes between Muslim separatists and government troops.

Naval force seizes ₱2M in illegal logs from Mindanao

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Personnel of the Naval Forces Central (Navforcen) on Monday night seized P2 million worth of logs on board a barge at Pier 7 in Mandaue City, Cebu.

Forester Fedencio Carreon of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) based in Cebu City said about 10 truckloads of lumber were confiscated from LCM Condor from Davao Oriental after its crew members failed to present documents for the shipment.

He, however, could not give the exact number of the logs seized because 10 Cenro personnel were still conducting an inventory of the items.

But Carreon said he had asked the Cebu Coast Guard Station to prevent the barge from leaving Pier 7 pending the filing of charges against the shipment's owner identified as Rogelio Cuta and shipper, Benjie Apostol, both from Davao Oriental.

The possible case that would be filed, he said, was smuggling of lumber under Presidential Decree 705, or the revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

Carreon said he still has to decide if he would include in the charges the 10 crew members who were not allowed to leave the barge, which was being guarded by Navy personnel.

Intercepted

Lt. Cmdr. Romeo Pulido, Navforcen information officer, said the team headed by Cmdr. Rene Medina aboard the Navy ship Salvador Abcede intercepted the barge from Davao Oriental while it was approaching Pier 7 at about 6 p.m.

He said the operation stemmed from intelligence reports received by his office from the Armed Forces Central Command based in Cebu City.

Pulido said they immediately seized the logs when the crew members failed to present proper documents for the shipment.

Carreon said the lumber was supposed to be delivered to Green Peak, a lumber dealer in Mandaue City.

Shortly after the logs were seized, the Cenro officer said Apostol went to his office and tried to convince him that the shipment was legal by showing some documents.

"But the transport documents have several abnormalities," he said.

Carreon said Apostol showed to him a certificate from Cenro in Davao Oriental, which was only applicable for planted species like mahoganies.

But since most of the lumber was *lawaan*, he added, the shipment should have a certificate of lumber origin (CLO).

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

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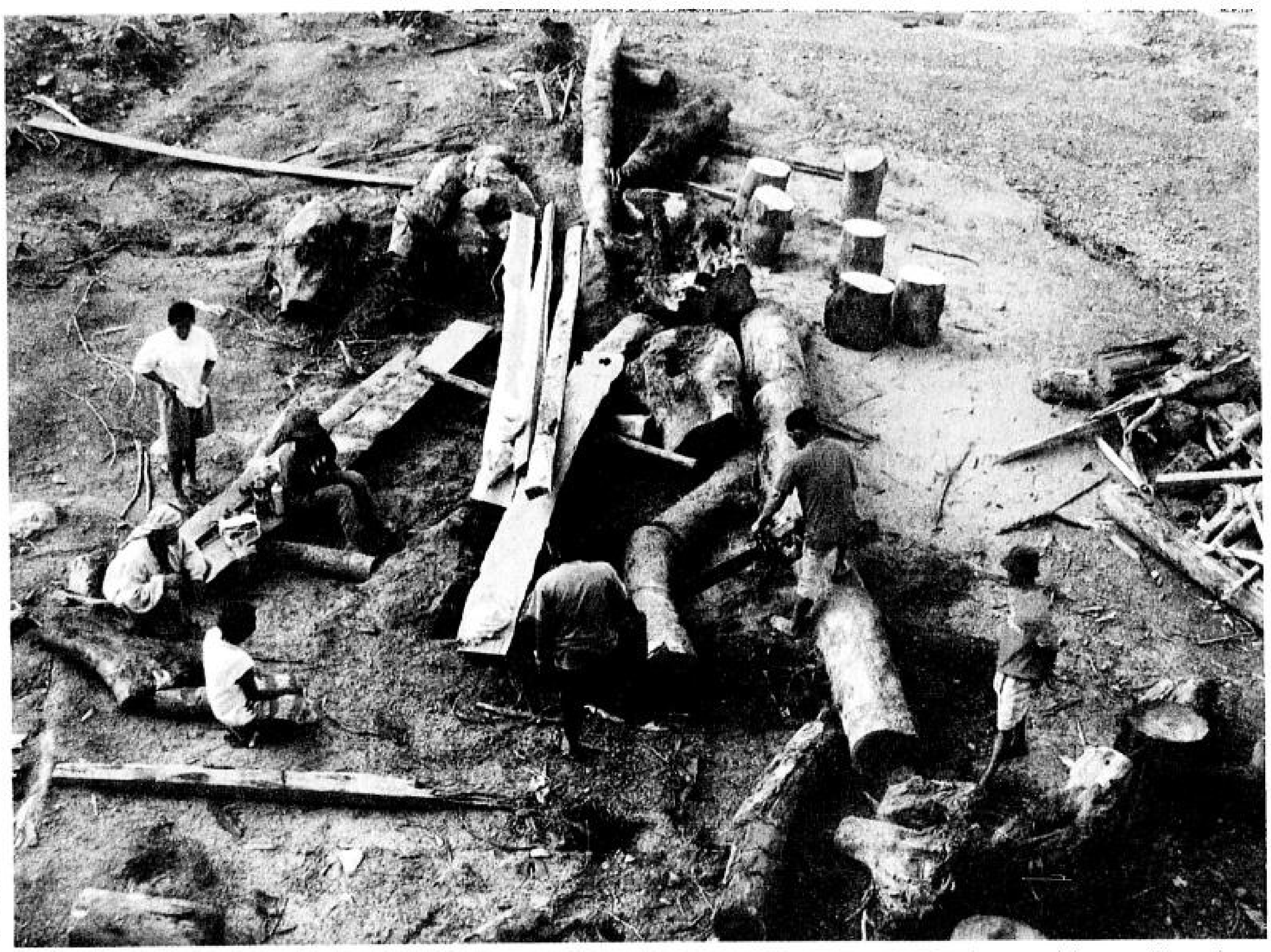
QUEZON REHAB

Survivors' challenges

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Romulo O. Ponte
Infanta, Quezon

BARELY two months after a spate of typhoons left hundreds of people dead in the towns of Infanta, Real and General Nakar in northern Quezon, the survivors are finding it difficult to move forward without painful memories lurking in the shadows.



TYPHOON victims cut logs they retrieved from the Tignoan River in Real town in Quezon to be used as housing materials even without the necessary permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

PHOTOS BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

"I want to build a new house, even a small shack [for] my family, but I want it far from its former location. I can still hear the calls for help of my two children who died in the flood," said Infanta farmer Pablito Ordinado, tears welling in his eyes.

That fateful night of Nov. 29, 2004, Ordinado was in a farm across the Agus River when rampaging flood swept away his shack. The next morning, when he was able to cross the river, he found his family in the village school that served as an evacuation center, but without Jolife, 14, and Henry, 5.

Two days later, Ordinado found the bodies of his children along a riverbank in neighboring General Nakar. His daughter-in-law, Rose, has remained missing.

FIGURES OF TRAGEDY

Real, Infanta and General Nakar:
Dead: 670
Injured: 369
Missing: 240
Destroyed: 4,364 houses.
1,575 ha of farmlands
Damaged: 5,646 houses

SOURCES: DSWD-QUEZON, DA

With no more farm to till to be able to support his family, Ordinado has found his dream house much farther from reality. They still live in the cramped school canteen that serves as temporary shelter for other typhoon victims. Hanging blankets separate each family of evacuees to give them a semblance of privacy.

Ordinado said he had yet to receive the cash assistance promised by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the victims. "It could be a great help, but I was not lucky," he said, now with a faint smile.

New house

In Barangay Capalong, Real, Jose Dogta, 72, patiently removed compacted mud from where his house once stood. He was searching for a water pump that was buried by mud that flowed from the nearby hills

"We were told that a tidal wave was coming, so we scampered for safety in another house on a higher ground. Instead of rushing giant waves from the sea in front of us, what rolled down and destroyed my house was the flow of mud from the back," recalled.

A deadly mix of logs and earth dislodged by heavy rain from the Sierra Madre mountain range entombed communities and other areas in Real, Infanta and General Nakar, shortly before midnight of Nov. 29.

Tropical depression "Winnie" and Typhoon "Yoyong" struck in succession, triggering landslides and flash floods that created out of villages a panorama of mud littered with bodies. Farms were devastated, roads and bridges damaged, and trees uprooted.

Dogta said he wanted to build again on the same spot where he lost his house. "But an old man like me now finds it hard to get materials," he lamented.

Drifted logs

Pointing at the long lines of drifted logs on the shore, Dogta said it was not that easy to produce lumber out of them because a permit was required from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Someone with a power saw quipped: "All of us here need those logs to repair our house. Why do we need to secure permits to cut those logs, which in the first place, were the cause of our present sufferings?" he asked. "Those drifted logs killed two members of my family and destroyed my house. Could I not just get back at those logs to at least repay for what it did to us?" the man said as he headed for the shore to cut more lumber.

Sawn lumber is sold by unlicensed gatherers of drifted logs at P8 to P11 per board foot.

Emrich Borja, DENR-Quezon chief, clarified that the logs belonged to the government and that the people could only gather treetops and branches for charcoal making.

"We have to put some order in the gathering of logs to avoid chaos. Those drifted logs will be sawn and distributed to the local government units for distribution to their constituents who need lumber for housing," he said.

Quezon Rep. Rafael Nantes called on all sectors, especially the politicians, to unite for the rehabilitation of northern Quezon.

He said he had already secured initial funds from the President for the rehabilitation of roads and bridges.

The collapsed Agus bridge connecting Infanta and General Nakar, and the Kinanliman bridge in Real are now passable, he said.

Nantes pledged to continue securing help from national government agencies.

Fear

But Infanta Mayor Grace America saw her town still in virtual state of calamity. "Fear continue to stalk Infanta folk, especially those living along the Agus River," she said.

The fear was compounded by the destruction of an irrigation gate in Barangay Banugao. America said the local government needed at least P34.5 million to rehabilitate the irrigation system.

She said the municipality was still groping for a stable supply of basic needs. "My people are hungry because there are no available work around. There are no farms and fishponds to work on," she said.

Infanta needs at least P15.8 million to rehabilitate its water system, she said. The residents depend on bottles of mineral water donated by Agua Vida. The company installed a purifying machine and an electric generator inside the compound of the Infanta Cathedral.

Francisco Faildon, a company staff member, said his group intended to stay for one month. "Our presence was requested by Infanta Bishop Rolando Tirona," he said.

America said medicine stocks, especially for the children, were abundant. "What we're short of are medicines for adults," she said.

Oscar Catelo of the Infanta Integrated Community Assistance Inc., a Church-based organization in northern Quezon, described the typhoon survivors as "still in the stage of recovery—emotionally and psychologically."

"The people are apprehensive at the forecast of concerned government agencies that the calamity is bound to happen again, not after 50 years, but even after a year or next year because of the destroyed landscape," he said.

The current debate among the residents, especially of Infanta, is whether it will be much better to relocate the whole town.

"But the general sentiment is to first wait for more exhaustive studies from other concerned government agencies and their recommended courses of action," Catelo said.

He recalled a similar flash flood that happened in Infanta on Sep. 3, 1929.

The people were all eager to transfer the whole community to a safe and higher place after the flood, he said. "But it was strongly opposed and prevented by landed families in the poblacion and also by the business bloc," he said.

Manuel Tena, social welfare officer of Infanta, said donations from organizations, companies and individuals continued to pour in.

"But we're now using the relief goods in the 'food-for-work' scheme that we're now implementing to help in clearing the clogged roads and arteries fast," he said.

Roel Rivera, 26, whose house in Barangay Banugao was also washed away by the floods, was able to log nine days of work under the scheme. He helped dredge canals for P150 a day, plus two kilos of rice and assorted dried fish.

Politicking

Fr. Eusebio Molde, the parish priest of Real assailed local officials for treating the victims as "potential voters."

"Instead of looking upon the typhoon victims as people of God in desperate situations, they treat them as future voters," Molde said.

He revealed that donations were stripped of their original markings and replaced with the name of the politicians to give the impression that the goods came from them.

In several instances, he said, the officials even wanted to take possession of the relief goods that were channeled through the Church, purportedly for a more coordinated distribution.

"For all we know, they just wanted to change the name of the original donor with their own names," he said.

In General Nakar, Mayor Hernando Avellaneda, who is still reeling from charges of illegal logging filed by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor—which he has strongly denied—has turned the tables on the DENR for allegedly withholding the guidelines on the retrieval of drifted logs to the detriment of the homeless victims.

Avellaneda recalled that during a meeting with officials of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, "we were told that the local residents could gather tops and branches of uprooted logs for the shelter needs of our constituents and livelihood resources."

He said they planned to use the tree parts with potential woodcraft value as materials for alternative livelihood.

Under the NDCC plan, Avellaneda said the big logs would be sawn in the Kasibu sawmill in Real and the resulting lumber would be divided, 70-30, between the local government and the sawmill.

"It is intended for the shelter requirements of our people, but until now, it is not yet being implemented for lack of guidelines from the DENR," he said

He announced that the planned woodcraft industry would start soon.

Relocation

The mayor added that eight "probable" relocation sites had already been found for at least 1,700 homeless residents.

Materials for the housing units will come from nongovernment organizations and local government agencies. "The houses will be built by the people themselves through the *bayanihan* [spirit]," Avellaneda said.

Infanta Mayor America said the municipal government was still negotiating with landowners for relocation sites for at least 1,592 homeless victims.

The family of actor Onemig Bondoc, whose father owns at least 50 hectares of land in Barangay Agus-Agus, has donated two hectares, she said.

"And the Bondoc family was still willing to provide us more, subject to our developments plans in the area," the mayor said.

Power

An official of the Quezon Electric Cooperative II, which serves Infanta, Real, General Nakar and the island-municipality of Polillo, said almost 80 percent of the electricity needs of the affected towns had been restored.

Only 12 barangays have remained without power, said Victor Cada, Quezelco II general manager.

What hampered the installation of fallen electric posts were the slow road-clearing operations and acquisition of new rights-of-way for new lines.

America knew too well that rehabilitation efforts in Infanta would not go anywhere if the flood victims continued to depend on donations.

Miriam Destajo of the Infanta Prelature Social Action Center said both the Church and the government's programs were oriented to encourage the victims to participate actively in the efforts.

Tena, the town's social welfare officer and one of the flood victims, said the evacuation centers were now empty. The 716 families, who had lived in the centers for the past several days, returned to their houses, stayed in tents pitched in their lots or might have sought shelter in the houses of relatives in the province or elsewhere.

Destajo said the flood victims in Infanta, Real, General Nakar and several towns in Aurora province were given briefing and de-briefing sessions and all sorts of assistance for their recovery.

Lately, she said, the Social Action Center was preparing individuals in a trainors' training for a trauma healing session.

She said relocation sites had been identified and being evaluated for worthiness, viability and safety.

Most of the evacuees prefer to be relocated in areas near their workplaces, she added. Only about 10 percent of them transferred to other provinces.

The social action center's volunteers, in cooperation with the government, are embarking on a survey project throughout the prelature to identify victims who have suffered the most or considered to be the poorest and, therefore, must be given priority in outside assistance.

The Department of Public Works and Highways has hired at least three construction companies to speed up the rehabilitation of infrastructure projects, which includes the clearing of mud and clogged highways in Real, Infanta and other areas.

"FOOD-FOR-WORK" program in progress in Infanta town.

RELATIVES and friends help a typhoon victim start life anew with a new house to be built from lumber produced from drifted logs and without any assistance from the government.

Tent people

ROBERTO Buendicho, chair of Barangay Ilog in Infanta, Quezon, accompanied his constituents back to their homelots in what is now a dangerous open field.

"Donors like the Rotary International and other groups gave us 23 tents. Each tent is occupied by two to three families and they intend to farm collectively and be productive instead of just receiving relief goods from generous benefactors," Buendicho said.

He said a Laguna group, called "Operation Compassion," supplied them with seeds of corn, mustard, peanut, string beans, pechay and mung beans.

Buendicho admitted that the tent people were in a precarious situation. When it rains, they feel nervous at the thought that nature might again unleash its deadly fury, he said.

The residents were instructed to go to nearby houses with stronger foundations in case of continuous rain.

One of the tent occupants, Nenita Cuadro, 37, who has five children, said life had become miserable. It's too uncomfortable when it rains because of the noisy raindrops, she said.

At night, it is too cold inside the tent, and during the day, it is terribly hot, she added.

"What we need actually is support so we can build our houses no matter how small they are," Cuadro said.

Another evacuee, Marilou Astoveza, 39, who has five children, aired a similar appeal: support for building a simple house.

The tent occupants understood the hardships of staying in an open field washed out by last year's floods.

Church and government leaders agree that two months since the day of the catastrophe, they were now in the period of rehabilitation. *Romulo O. Ponte*

Kaye won't intervene for kin

By Leila B. Salaverria

KAYE Torres, daughter of actress Nida Blanca, will not intervene in the investigation of her mother's murder even if it would involve people close to her.

This was according to Torres' lawyer Harriet Demetriou, who also said Kaye was giving Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez a free hand in the 2001 murder case.

"(Torres) will never object to the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) or the DOJ (Department of Justice) inviting Elena or Ditas de la Paz. She will never coddle anyone, not even her own relatives," Demetriou said in a phone interview.

The lawyer added it would be unfair to say that Torres was shielding anyone in the case because Kaye had been cooperative since the beginning.

Elena de la Paz is Blanca's longtime aide, while Ditas de la Paz is a second cousin of Torres. Both women, along with former military intelligence chief Galileo Kintanar, were to be subpoenaed yesterday in connection with the probe on the actress' killing.

Witness Ranny Francisco has identified Elena as the woman who was with two men who fetched Blanca from the Atlanta Centre in San Juan hours before she was found murdered in the early morning of Nov. 7, 2001.

On the other hand, Ditas was the one who bought the plane tickets for Rod Strunk, Blanca's husband who is the main suspect in her death.

The government is expected to refile its extradition bid against Strunk, who is in the United States.

A US court earlier rejected the country's bid to bring Strunk back to the Philippines to face trial for his wife's killing. It cited lack of evidence.

Demetriou said yesterday that she would not be a lawyer for Elena and would never represent the latter. "I was never the lawyer of Elena because she's a suspect," she explained.

Segregate or else, Manila tells malls

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MANILA is taking the problem of garbage management to the city's malls.

Soon, commercial centers in Manila would have to segregate their own garbage or face non-collection, said Rafael Borromeo, head of Manila's Department of Public Services.

"Our goal is to reduce garbage by segregation at source," said Borromeo.

The DPS has begun discussing the program with administrators of malls, department stores and commercial centers.

"So far, they are okay with it," said Borromeo, who added that DPS dump trucks currently collect mixed garbage from these places.

The garbage segregation program is part of the city's implementation of Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Waste Management Act of 2001.

The law requires all public and private business establishments and offices, and households, to have separate bins for biodegradable waste, such as paper and leftover food, and non-biodegradable refuse, which includes plastic and styrofoam.

Malls and commercial centers contribute 20 to 25 percent of the roughly 1,500 tons of trash the city generates everyday.

Some 100 fastfood outlets in the city are already under the segregation project and are being made to comply with it.

Lawyer indicted for libel

By Tina G. Santos

THE VALENZUELA City Regional Trial Court has indicted a lawyer and four tabloid newspaper executives for 16 counts of libel against a meat processing firm.

In his resolution, Assistant City Prosecutor Eriberto Aricheta said he found sufficient evidence to hold lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio, who ran but lost in the 2003 senatorial race, and the four editors, liable for the charges.

Mauricio was tagged by Foodsphere Inc., makers of processed meat products, as responsible for the alleged "malicious publication of defamatory news items" sometime last year.

Indicted with Mauricio were Lorenzo Banag and Cris Marcelino, editor in chief and editor, respectively, of the tabloid "Bagong Tiktik," and Joey Venancio and Nerie Banga, publisher and editor in chief, respectively, of the tabloid "Hataw."

Foodsphere officials alleged that the respondents conducted a demolition campaign against the firm "through repeated media attacks" based on allegations of defective meat products last year.

Foodsphere is the maker of CDO brand of meat products.

Mauricio branded the suit as harassment because he wrote about worms reportedly found in their products.

JOAN BONDOC

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING
A policeman tries to relax as a medical technologist pokes a needle into his vein during an annual blood-letting activity in Camp Crame.

Detractors helped success of MMDA projects, BF claims

By Luige A. del Puerto

IT WAS a case of detractors helping the success of programs they aimed to destroy.

This was the assessment of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando of massive and staunch opposition to his agency's wet flag and prison bus schemes.

"I was surprised at the way things turned out," he said, noting that people in the metropolis were talking about the schemes and getting educated that waiting on the road was not right.

Fernando was a guest during Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando's annual report to the City Council yesterday. The mayor is the chair's wife.

The MMDA head said that only a "few mayors" were opposing the measures and expressed hope that these would not drag the other mayors into the issue.

Fernando said that currently, these controversial schemes were the best that the agency had to keep pedestrians on sidewalks.

Among the mayors strongly opposing the MMDA schemes are Manila's Lito Atienza, Pasay's Wenceslao Trinidad and Mandaluyong's Neptali "Boyet" Gonzales II.

Ironically, the streets in these cities crawl with pedestrians encroaching on roads and streets.

METROBRIEFS

Reconsider transfer

A PRIVATE prosecutor yesterday questioned the decision of Judge Henrick Gingoyon to commit alleged wife-killer SPO1 Joy Tan Decena from the Pasay City jail to the National Center for Mental Health. Lawyer Reynaldo Bagatsing said the transfer could be a ruse for him to escape confinement. Bagatsing is asking Gingoyon to reconsider the transfer. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Las Piñas festival

THE STO. Niño De Providencia is celebrating its 13th feast day today from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 65 A. Pijuan St., BFRV, Las Piñas City. The celebration will be highlighted by a motorcade of the image of the Infant Jesus to start at 2:15 p.m. from the Sto. Niño Prayer Room to Mary Mother of Church Parish, both in Las Piñas. Distribution of novenas, posters of the Infant Jesus, and bottles of anointed oil will start at 7:30 a.m. of the same day. Prayer and healing sessions will be held throughout the day.

Pi Sigma Delta fete

THE Pi Sigma Delta Sorority is celebrating its 30th (pearl) anniversary with a homecoming on Jan. 29 at 5:30 p.m. at the penthouse of the Antel Building, 154 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. The event will also mark the launching of the Pi Sigma Delta Outstanding Women Scholars' Fund. Sisters are encouraged to come in "Jeans and Pearls." Guest speaker will be Anneli Lontoc of the Land Transportation Office. For information, contact Marge Salandanan-Pambid at 924-3176, or Vangie Jimenez-Esquejo at 0917-9775215.

B. Quevedo; 64

BONIFACIO "Boni" Quevedo of Longos, Bacoor, Cavite and Vigan, Ilocos Norte, will be interred today, at the Pulang Lupa Public Cemetery in Las Piñas City after a Mass at the La Bien Memorial Chapel in Maliksi, Bacoor, Cavite. Quevedo died on Jan. 21 at the age of 64. He is survived by his children Gina, Rey, Robert, Ronald, Sister Meding and grandchildren. Friends in Greymarville Subdivision in Talon II, Las Piñas, are extending deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

Mike should apologize to Jamby

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

IF NATURAL Resources and Environment Secretary Mike Defensor has no rebuttal to Sen. Jamby Madrigal's denial of his charges that her family operated logging concessions in Quezon and Aurora provinces, and that she owned two cement factories, then he made a mistake.

People who have wrongly accused others of wrongdoing in public should make a public apology.

The President's *niño bonito* should not brush aside his mistake by offering a hand of reconciliation to the senator. He should first make a public apology before expecting Madrigal to extend to him her hand of reconciliation.

All of us make mistakes. But only a few have the courage to admit their mistakes.

***

I made wrong accusations against some people in this column a number of times. When I realized my mistake, I promptly apologized in this same column. I made the apology, knowing that my credibility would be diminished.

Of course, some readers got disenchanted with this writer, but others realized that if I made a *mea culpa*, I could be trusted.

They reckoned that I would be careful next time not to make the same mistake.

Mike Defensor should realize that people trust those who admit they're wrong and are ready to face the consequences.

***

But I will never apologize to Fouzi Bondagjy, a Saudi resident in this country for an accusation that he is an illegal recruiter.

Bondagjy had filed several libel cases against me, INQUIRER publisher Gani Yambot and editor in chief Letty Magsanoc.

Through his lawyer Bonifacio Alentajan, he even asked that we be prevented from leaving the country while the libel case against us is pending at the sala of a Makati judge.

The National Bureau of Investigation arrested Bondagjy recently on illegal recruitment charges.

This foreigner has the temerity to ask the courts to issue an immigration hold-departure order for me and my INQUIRER bosses, even if he knows that incurring a libel case is a risk journalists take while doing their job.

Why doesn't he leave the country instead, since he's an undesirable alien?

Who is his protector?

***

Probably one of the most incompetent government officials around is Mel Robles, former spokesperson of the influential El Shaddai Catholic charismatic religious group, who heads the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA).

Robles was grilled at the Senate recently during a budget hearing on his agency. Senators Joker Arroyo and Juan Ponce Enrile took turns roasting him.

The senators got irritated with Robles because he couldn't answer simple questions like how much the LRTA earned last year, how much was the profit or losses, and the firm's general financial condition.

Enrile scolded Robles' assistant who was coaching him, and told the aide to step aside. The senator said Robles had no business being the LRTA head if he didn't know what was happening in his agency.

During a break in the hearing, Robles and other transport officials were served lunch. Robles was seen eating with gusto, my source said, even when his pals could hardly eat because they were nervous.

Tutors, students start over

From page A18

operations may take at least two weeks. In the meantime, the school's 42 classes, divided into morning and afternoon shifts, would be held in the free spaces and buildings that survived the blaze.

Good thing the school was given a confidence boost with news that its 2,000 students made an unprecedented leap in the ranking of Manila's elementary schools in terms of performance, as seen in the public school system's annual assessment examinations.

Out of 72 public elementary schools in Manila, Geronimo Santiago jumped from 65th to 13th place in terms of academic achievement, Caraig said.

"We were all devastated by the fire, but when we heard the good news, our spirits were lifted," she related.

"That's why I told my students that this would be a new start for us," said teacher Virginia Opleda, who admitted she was teary-eyed when she saw her room ablaze on the upper floor of one of the buildings.

In her 30 years as a school teacher, Opleda said she had never experienced the "wholesale" loss of her handmade school materials and visual aids, student's grade forms, lesson plans, teaching manuals and supplementary materials.

On Monday, it would be like starting over for her, along with other teachers and students of the 47-year-old school.

"The teachers would be exerting extra efforts in terms of discipline. On the other hand, the students would be adjusting to a new class environment," Caraig said.

"I am also asking the teachers and students to continue giving their best, against all odds," the principal added.

"If you ask me, this is the ultimate challenge."

6 firms...

From page A18

under the Presidential Security Group.

Burgos said the ferry service revival would not be a security nightmare even though the boats would be passing by Malacañang.

Three of the proposed ferry stations—in Arroceros, Nagtahan and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines—are near the Palace. "There would be enough security measures observed," he said.

Operators of the ferry stations would be in charge of implementing the inspections, but the PCG would likely be sending personnel to ride the ferries regularly to guard the passengers.

Trained dogs would also be sent to the ferry stations to sniff for explosives or drugs.

The 13 stations along the Pasig River were identified as Del Pan Bridge, Jones Bridge, MacArthur Bridge, Arroceros, Nagtahan, PUP and Sta. Ana in Manila; Lambingan Bridge and Hulo in Mandaluyong City; Valenzuela, Poblacion and Guadalupe in Makati City; and Bambang in Pasig City.

The construction of four terminals along one of Pasig River's main tributaries, the Marikina River, was also proposed by project leaders.

Boncadin said 5,000 families living by the river would be relocated to make way for the project.

With Leila B. Salaverria and Margaux C. Ortiz

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6 firms eye Pasig River ferry service

By Clarissa S. Batino

SIX PRIVATE companies are interested in running ferry services along the Pasig River once the government completes the construction of 13 boat stations from Manila to Marikina City.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said the national government would finance the construction of the 13 ferry stations, but would leave the ferry operations completely to the private sector.

Building each station would cost between P3 and P4 million, she said. The government would charge ferry operators a fee every time they dock on the stations. This early, there are already plans to put up stations all the way to Laguna Lake.

"We will not repeat the mistakes of the past. The previous ferry projects were designed to fail," said the budget chief. The government is now on its third attempt to revive the ferry system.

Boncodin, Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza and a representative of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando signed a memorandum of agreement yesterday launching the Pasig River Ferry System, one of the priority projects of the Arroyo administration.

"There are six groups interested in the ferry project. But we would know the final list by next month," said Transport Undersecretary Agustin Bengzon, adding that interested parties would have to invest about P5 million for each vessel that would ply the Pasig River.

Mendoza said the government would provide incentives to ferry operators such as exemptions from franchise fees and other charges. The operators could also qualify for import tax and tariff exemption.

Bengzon said the Pasig River ferry stations could be operational by the end of the year.

The stations would be equipped with amenities like air-conditioning, comfortable waiting areas, a ticketing system, scanners and metal detectors, comfort rooms, vendo machines and elevators for the disabled.

Reviving ferry services along the Pasig River would provide an alternative mode of transport that could help decongest the traffic-choked roads of Metro Manila.

The Pasig River provides a 25-kilometer natural inland waterway from Laguna Lake to Manila Bay.

In the past, the river served as a major transport route for cargoes and travelers within the metropolis. A ferry line used to ply the Pasig River route but halted its operations a couple of years ago.

Security measures similar to those practiced at mass transport facilities like LRT and MRT stations would be implemented with the start of the ferry run according to the Philippine Coast Guard. Bag inspections and the frisking of passengers would be implemented once the ferries become operational, said Lt. Wilfred Burgos, commander of the PCG's Pasig detachment, which is also

6 FIRMS/ A17

LOST AND FOUND. A teacher at the Geronimo Santiago Elementary School retrieves records that she had given up for lost. VAL HANDUMON

Tutors, students start over

By Tarra V. Quismundo

SOME 58 teachers of the Geronimo Santiago Elementary School on Nepomuceno Street in old Manila district of San Miguel would be spending the coming days preparing a makeshift school for their students who would be returning to a campus partially destroyed by fire Monday evening.

A day after firefighters put out a two-hour fire that razed three school buildings inside the campus, the Manila City government's engineering department began clearing the rubble.

Teachers, on the other hand, started preparing themselves for a weekend building temporary classrooms in the school garage and gymnasium, using dividers made of tin roof sheets and wood salvaged from the fire.

School principal Jesusa Caraig said she had been told clearing

TUTORS/ A17

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

TENNIS: 2005 Australian Open Semifinals; 10:30 a.m. and 4::30 p.m. (r-10 p.m.): Day 11 Highlights; 8 p.m.: Star Sports—The semifinals go underway down under.

GOLF: Asian Tour—Caltex Masters; 3 p.m.; ESPN—Pinoy golfers Angelo Que and Gerald Rosales begin their quest in the Asian Tour.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Chot leaves to scout SK, China fives

NATIONAL coach Chot Reyes leaves today for Shanghai, China, hoping to catch a flight from the Mainland to Seoul, South Korea, for the first of two Goodwill Games between Asian basketball powers China and Korea.

The Chinese and the South Koreans meet tomorrow in Seoul before squaring off a second time in Harbin, China on Jan. 30.

"Waiting list *kami* for Seoul, so we'll probably fly to Shanghai first and then catch a plane to Seoul," said Reyes, who will be accompanied in the scouting trip by assistant coach Aboy Castro.

"We're just waiting for our visas."

Reyes will be back early next week to meet with his coaching staff and plan their next course of action now that 39 of the 40 pros and amateurs invited to take the physical fitness test have already completed the requirement.

Last Tuesday, Talk 'N Text stars Willie Miller, Jimmy Alapag, Yancy de Ocampo and Mark Telan took the test at the Adidas basketball camp in Fort Bonifacio, leaving Sta. Lucia Realty's Dennis Espino, who begged off due to a back problem, as the only player among the invitees to pass up on the sessions.

"Obviously Miller couldn't participate in some of the drills because of an ankle sprain, but the others were impressive, especially Jimmy Alapag," said Reyes, adding Alapag may have topped two or three of the categories overall.

Reyes met with PBA coaches and former RP-Asian Games mentors Norman Black, Tim Cone and Jong Uichico last Monday at the Parc Royale Condominium and discussed basically the "clarification of roles, delineation of responsibilities, the selection process and the scheduling."

"It turned out very well," said Reyes. "Everyone was there except for coaches Perry Ronquillo and Boyzie Zamar, who both had previous commitments."

Earlier that day, the PBA board approved the RP team program presented by Reyes the week before, with Commissioner Noli Eala relaying the news to national coaches during their meeting that evening.

A committee headed by Alaska team manager Joaqui Trillo was designated to study the RP team budget proposal submitted by Reyes.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

MARVIN Ortiguerra of Welcoat and Mark Isip (right) of Magnolia battle for possession.

Wizards face Paintmasters in KO battle

IT HAS been eight months since Welcoat Paints lost to Magnolia-FEU in the last PBL championship series. Still, coach Caloy Garcia can't help but use that failed campaign as a motivation for the Paintmasters.

"I've been telling the team *na kailangan bumawi kami* (that we have to get even)," said Garcia.

Thus, the Paintmasters will try to settle that old score when they battle the Wizards in a knockout semifinal match in the PBL Open Championship at 3:30 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum.

The winner will clash with the Montaña Jewels in a best-of-five title duel starting Tuesday.

The Jewels advanced to the finals for the first time in seven years after sweeping Granny Goose Tortillos in their own semifinal series.

After taking the semifinal lead at 1-0, Magnolia-FEU failed to secure the remaining finals slot last Tuesday as Welcoat leveled the series with a 69-64 decision in Game 2.

"We need to surpass their intensity to win," said Wizards coach Koy Banal. "Most of them are veterans so we have to be focused always."

Although Welcoat has a more seasoned lineup, Garcia noted that the Wizards' coaching staff is more experienced.

"Coach Koy is a very good coach so I'm sure he's going to make adjustments in Game 3," said Garcia.

Welcoat is seeking a 10th finals appearance. *Jasmine W. Payo*

GAME TODAY (*Makati Coliseum*)
(Game 3 of best-of-three semifinals)
3:30 p.m.—Welcoat vs Magnolia-FEU

New equipment, repairs eat up SEAG fund

By Marc Anthony Ryes

ALMOST HALF of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games budget will be spent for the purchase of equipment and repair of the venues alone.

The two major requirements of the Nov. 27-Dec. 5 sportsfest scheduled in Metro Manila and three provincial sites will take up around P490 million of the budget pegged between P800 million to P1 billion according to Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee chair Obet Pagdanganan yesterday.

The amount is only 3.5 percent of what Vietnam spent two years ago in staging the SEAG in the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh even as Pagdanganan expressed confidence that the funding will come in on time mainly through the private sector.

"We are only spending $3.5 for every $100 they (Vietnam) spent, so I don't see any reason why we can't raise that," said Pagdanganan.

Pagdanganan, who is also the chair of the Philippine International Trading Corporation, added that P278 million is needed to purchase the equipment while P209 million is earmarked to rehabilitate the venues.

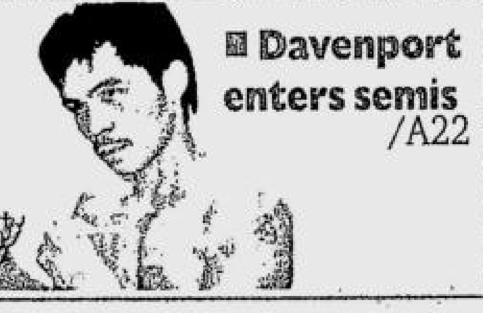
Majority of the equipment are modern electronic scoreboards and timers, which have to be imported for centerpiece events like football, track and field, swimming, gymnastics and boxing.

Pagdanganan added that P379M will be spent for the operating expenses of the different committees.

Another P30 million will be reserved for transportation with P4 million reserved for the security of the venues.

Pagdanganan noted that Vietnam spent close to $400 million when it first hosted the 11-nation event in 2003.

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Pacquiao impressive in sparring /A21
■ Davenport enters semis /A22



Acap hails appointment of De Vega

DE VEGA

THE ALLIANCE of Coaches and Athletes of the Philippines yesterday hailed the appointment of legendary trackster Lydia de Vega-Mercado as its liaison officer with the Philippine Sports Commission.

Acap president Bay Cristobal, a national basketball coach, said it's a welcome development because De Vega-Mercado could be an effective instrument in forging a harmonious working relations between Acap and the PSC.

"It's a very good move for us because we know that Lydia truly understands what the athletes and coaches feel," said Cristobal, whose group has been very vocal against alleged irregularities by previous PSC administrations.

Acap had already conducted protest actions against former PSC heads Butch Tuason and Eric Buhain to protect the rights of its members.

"It's going to be like the athletes commission," explained De Vega-Mercado of her new role at the PSC. "I'm just going to make sure the PSC does something to improve the conditions of the athletes and coaches."

Also appointed with her was former Gintong Alay chief Michael Keon, who will be the new national training director for the athletes training for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Keon is currently the athletic council chair of Ilocos Norte.

The development came on the heels of the PSC move to provide Class A and Class B athletes of P4.5 million worth of fresh set of uniforms from shoes, jackets, bags and the like on top of new beddings for their quarters worth P2.5 million.

Marc Anthony Reyes

RP's Que tees off in Caltex Masters today

SINGAPORE—Filipino Angelo Que vies against some of the world's finest players when the Caltex Masters presented by Carlsberg, Singapore 2005 fires off today at the Masters course of the Laguna National Golf and Country Club in this island-state.

European Ryder Cup heroes Colin Montgomerie and Lee Westwood head a stellar 144-strong field battling for the top purse of $1 million.

Que, still fresh off his victory in the Carlsberg Masters Vietnam last December, is the only Filipino seeing action in the tournament won last year by Montgomerie.

Que came back from two shots down on the last nine holes to beat Thai Thongchai Jaidee in Vietnam, thus ending a five-year title drought for Filipinos in the Asian Tour.

The win earned Que a three-year Tour exemption.

"The victory was great and it helped me regain my confidence," Que told reporters during a press briefing Tuesday where he shared the spotlight with Montgomerie, Jaidee and Malaysian Danny Chia.

"I've been practicing a lot back home and luckily for us, the weather in Manila has been nice. Hopefully, I'll play well this week and get off to a good start."

Frankie Miñoza, who lost his Japan Tour card after a bad season last year, is now campaigning in the Asian Tour but was not invited to the Caltex Masters.

The tournament, featuring the winners in this year's Asian Tour plus its top 40 players, is jointly sanctioned by the European and Asian Tour.

A pro-am tournament yesterday preceded the 72-hole main event whose star-studded inaugural in 2001 was topped by Fiji's current world No. 1 Vijay Singh.

India's Arjun Atwal won the 2002 edition before China's Zhang Lianwei beat Ernie Els for the 2003 title.

Sculpted by Dye Designs, the Masters Course places a premium on straight driving as water comes into play on 12 of the holes. *With a report from Artemio T. Engracia Jr., News Editor*

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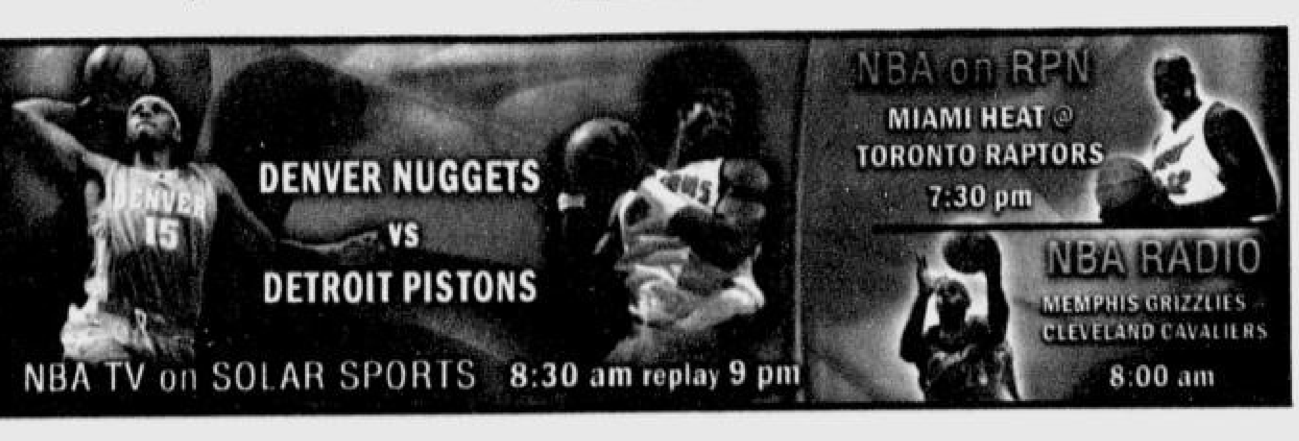

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8:00 am

Ginebra stays alive on Caguioa jumper

By June Navarro

GAME TOMORROW *(Araneta Coliseum)*
7:10 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Barangay Ginebra *(Game 5 best-of-five semifinals)*

MARK Caguioa's jumper with 3.9 seconds left carried Barangay Ginebra to a thrilling 94-92 win over San Miguel Beer last night that forced a deciding Game 5 in their Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup semifinal series at the Araneta Coliseum.

Caguioa received the inbound pass from Rodney Santos and drilled in the jump shot that allowed the Gin Kings to equalize the best-of-five series at 2-all.

"I was focused when I took that shot because I didn't want the game to go into overtime," said Caguioa, whose jumper over the outstretched arms of Dale Singson broke a 92 deadlock forged by SMB's Danny Ildefonso with still 1:15 left.

Olsen Racela then tried to beat the buzzer with an off-balanced triple that was way off the mark after he was accidentally tripped by Eric Menk before the buzzer.

Eric Menk finished with 24 points and 11 rebounds, Santos matched his career-high of 23 markers while Caguioa added 19 points and nine boards for the Kings, who will seek a 15th championship appearance in Game 5 tomorrow.

It was a bitter loss for the Beermen, who came back from 16 points down to send the game into a thriller behind a 35-point job by Danny Seigle.

Seigle shot 23 in the second half, 13 in the third quarter as he joined hands with Racela in a 19-5 SMB attack that tied the count at 59-all.

San Miguel went on to take a 64-61 before the Kings regrouped to grab the upper hand at the end of the period, 69-67.

Ginebra, which has now won Games 2 and 4 of the series, went on top by five at 87-82 but Seigle fired back-to-back baskets before Santos struck with a triple for 90-86.

Seigle countered with his game's final basket and then Danny Ildefonso made two free throws off Menk for that 90-90 tie.

The winner of tomorrow's rubber match moves into a best-of-seven finals against Talk 'N Text starting Sunday.

The Beermen went scoreless for almost three minutes in the second quarter, giving the Gin Kings an opening to mount an offensive assault anchored on Menk and Santos.

Seigle knocked in a lean-on jumper to break the impasse but the Gin Kings steadily pulled away, 29-22, from an 18-17 Ginebra edge in the first 10 minutes of action.

Meanwhile, sources said coach Bong Ramos is close to signing a three-year offer to call the shots for the FedEx Express.

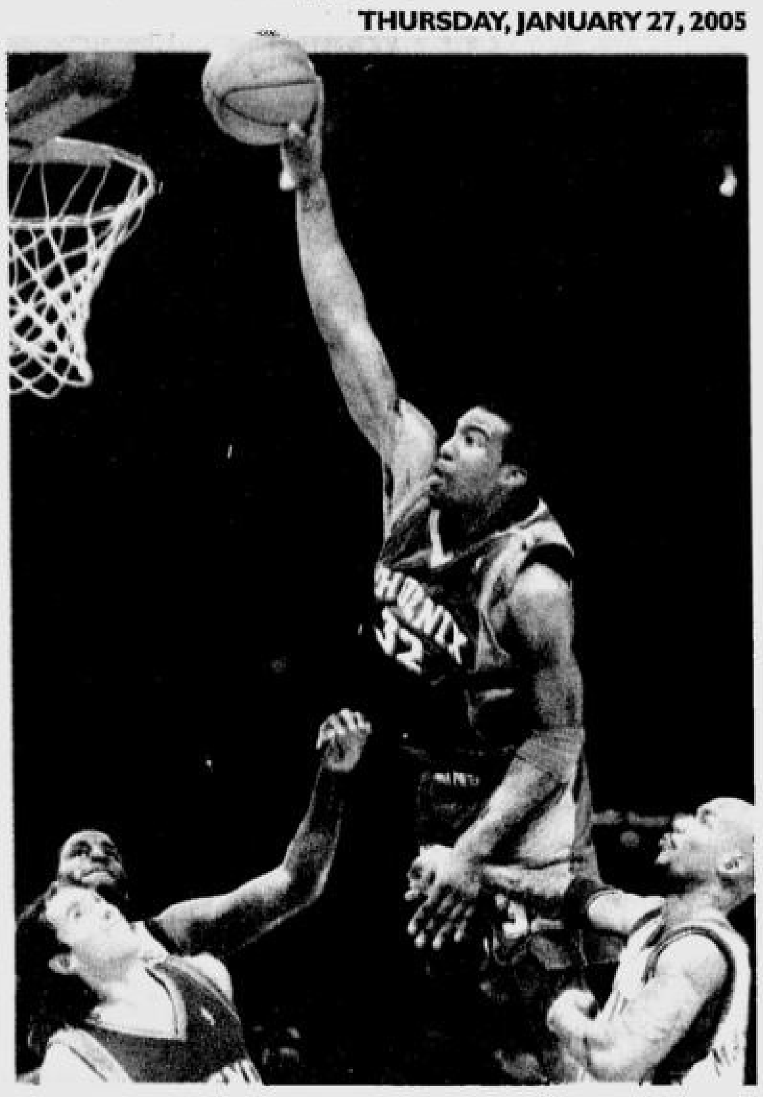
If the deal pushes through, Ramos will have former UP Maroon Dolreich "Bo" Perasol as his assistant coach.

The scores:

GINEBRA 94—Menk 24, Santos 23, Caguioa 19, Salvacion 10, Helterbrand 9, Dimaunahan 5, Seigle 3, Adducul 1, Walkvist 0, Noble 0.

SAN MIGUEL 92—Seigle 35, Racela 18, Ildefonso 14, Belasco 14, Hontiveros 5, Peña 5, Singson 1, Villoria 0, Mente 0.

Quarters: 18-17, 49-36, 69-67, 94-92.



PHOENIX center Amare Stoudemire soars for a slam dunk past New York Knicks guard Stephon Marbury. The Suns defeated the Knicks, 133-118. Story on page 22. REUTERS

Letran eyes semis slot vs La Salle

GAMES TODAY *(Rizal Memorial Coliseum)*
3 p.m. — Far Eastern vs Santo Tomas
5 p.m.— Letran vs La Salle

By Musong R. Castillo

A LETRAN side with the inside track on the last semifinal slot exhausts the first of two chances it has, clashing with La Salle in the penultimate elimination round playdate of the Shakey's V-League.

Letran is in fourth with a 5-5 card and leads idle Lyceum (4-7), and the Lady Knights can hasten the completion of the final four cast with a victory in their 5 p.m. collision with the Lady Archers.

The race for top seeding in the semifinals is also on today, with the Santo Tomas Tigresses shooting for their 11th win against the Far Eastern Lady Tams also at the Rizal Coliseum.

The UST-Far Eastern match is set at 3 p.m.

Santo Tomas needs a win to have a mathematical chance of booking top seeding and the Tigresses must then hope for at least one La Salle loss in the Lady Archers' final two games to seal the ranking.

As it is, the Tigresses will lose in the tiebreak to La Salle if both teams end up with 11-1 cards by virtue of an inferior quotient.

Meanwhile, the second chance that Letran has is at the close of the eliminations on Sunday, fittingly against a Lyceum squad that will be coming off two straight five-set losses.

The Lady Knights have peaked at the right time, pushing Santo Tomas to the limit the last time out while owning a straight-sets win over the Lady Legends two weeks ago.

Bill Shaw golfest offers ₱5M in prizes

A WHOPPING package of prizes worth about P5 million is at stake in the 16th Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Tournament set tomorrow and Saturday at the east and west courses of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

Format of play is aggregate at the West Course and scramble at the East Course with the team having the lowest net for 36 holes winning the overall title.

About 200 teams are taking part in this year's edition presented by Samsung Electronics Phils., Northwest Airlines and Globe Telecoms.

Hole-in-one sponsors are Northwest Airlines (Mla-NY-Mla Business Class tickets for two), Toyota Balintawak (Camry), Toyota Motors Philippines (Camry) Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Inc. and Union Motors Phils. (Lancer GLX M/T), Kart Plaza (Yamaha kart), Kiamco World Inc. (motorcycle) and Asian Therapeutics Inc.-OSIM (GNC Products) as hole-in-one sponsors.

Major sponsors are Unilever Phils., First Gentleman Foundation, Philippine Airlines (two round-trip business-class tickets to Singapore), Pacsports, Premier, Sta. Elena Properties, Boysen, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

Quezon Huskers rip Fujians for first win

CEBU CITY—The Quezon Coco Huskers turned tough in the final half en route to a 91-71 triumph over the Fujian Province selection yesterday and barge into the win column of the Mayor Tomas Osmeña Sinulog Invitational Cup at the New Cebu City Coliseum.

Their victory came on top of the big wins of M. Lhuillier and the RP Team, backed up by Cebuana Lhuillier, against separate rivals to remain unscathed in three games.

M. Lhuillier routed the North Cotabato Braves, 107-77, while the Nationals got the needed push from Rommel Niño Caneleta and Egay Echavez in the final period for an 86-74 victory over Konkuk University of South Korea.

Richard Hardin and Jeff Flowers, who topped with 16 points apiece, spearheaded the Huskers' second half breakaway that saw the gap widen to 63-50 at the close of the third period. Buboy Rodriguez and Francis Sanz then delivered the finishing for the Huskers.

Import John Grice went on with his scoring spree, leading the Jewelers with 38 points as he powered M. Lhuillier's 20-point margin, 52-32, at the half.

The Braves hardly showed resistance in the ensuing play as the gap further ballooned going down the stretch.

The RP-Cebuana Lhuillier Team had a rough sailing at the start trailing 36-45 at the half but an 11-3 run reversed the tide and installed the Nationals on top, 48-47, with 6:06 left in the third canto.

The Jewelers and the Nationals are battling at presstime for the solo lead and the first finals berth.

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National triathlon weekend

SEASONED triathletes George Vilog and Sandra Araullo will be defending their titles in the National Triathlon Championship set this weekend in Bayawan City, Negros Oriental.

The event, which will serve as one of the three qualifying races for the national team, will kick off another busy year for the Triathlon Association of the Philippines.

"We are confident that 2005 will be a good year for triathlon," said TRAP president Tom Carrasco, noting that the year will be highlighted by the sport's debut in the Southeast Asian Games in November. "We are looking at a possible top six finish in the Asian championships in Singapore and we are also eyeing two gold medals in the SEAG."

"It is a great honor for Bayawan to be partners with Philippine triathlon," said Bayawan mayor German Sarana Jr. "We are hoping our hosting this year's event will help in our preparation for the SEA Games."

Winners in the men's and ladies' divisions will receive the P25,000 top prize. Cash incentives will also be awarded to national record breakers.

Jasmine Payo

SPORTSWATCH

St. Benilde booters nip Mapua

COLLEGE of St. Benilde rallied for a 2-1 victory over Mapua at the start of the second elimination round of NCAA Season 80 Football tournament at the Philippine Navy Field 1 in Taguig City. The Cardinals drew first blood from a cross by Carlo Rabe, but Blazers striker Rogello Lo equalized on the 85th minute. Jannery Aboabo then headed the winning goal deep into injury time. Earlier, the CSB juniors, represented by La Salle Greenhills, tamed the San Beda Cubs, 6-0, with a hat trick from striker Jerico Divinagracia. In the other junior division match, star striker Kevin Brinas scored all five goals for Philippine Christian University as the Dolphins blanked the Letran Knights.

Stockinger bound for jr karting

MARLON Stockinger of the SFIC (Swiss Finance and Investment Corp.) Racing Team, who won the Junior division of the Rotax Max Challenge Philippines 2004, became the first and youngest Filipino to compete in the Junior World Rotax Max Karting Finals held in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, recently. The 13-year-old, sponsored by Puma, Birel and Intrepid, topped the Standard Insurance Expert Light division of the 5th Arthur Tuason Memorial Cup last Nov. 29.

Pamintuan gets Golden Wheel award

NATIONAL drag race champion Nelson Pamintuan of Nelson Auto Center Racing was awarded this year's Golden Wheel Award for drag racing for successfully racing his Toyota T-powered Jeepster against the modern machinery of his rivals. Pamintuan edged Joey Galang, aboard a Honda Civic, to top the Petron Blaze Shootout National Drag Race Championship series organized by the Activity Asia Association and sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Jones keeps AF3 championship

THE ASIAN Formula Three Corporation (AF3) has confirmed that Australian driver Christian Jones will get to keep his 2004 AF3 Championship trophy after Irish John O'Hara and his Shell Kinetic F3 Team withdrew their appeal against the one minute penalty given to O'Hara in round six of the AF3 Series held at Goldenport Circuit, Beijing, last August.

UST men's tennis champion

UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas captured the men's tennis crown via a sweep of the double-round eliminations, and so did the boys of University of the East in juniors volleyball of UAAP Season 67 over the weekend. The Tigers regained the men's tennis crown by beating De La Salle, the Season 66 champion, 2-0, Saturday at the Rizal Racket Club in Pasig City. UE clinched its third juniors crown, defeating Ateneo, 25-10, 25-11, 25-13, Saturday to post an eight-game sweep of two-round eliminations in boys' volleyball at the Pages' homecourt in Recto.

Torre holds Lucena chess 'simul'

GRANDMASTER Eugene Torre will take on 15 challengers in a simultaneous chess exhibition today at the Sacred Heart College in Lucena City. The exhibition, sponsored by Diwa Learning Systems, will cap a weeklong school chess club tournament. It will cater to Sacred Heart's basic Education Department's students. The event is organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia in cooperation with the Grandmaster Eugenio Torre Chess Institute.

NM Marlon Bernardino

Daytime 3-cock derby at Sta. Ana

MORE than 100 fights are in store for aficionados today as the Daytime 3-Cock Derby gets going at Sta. Ana Cockpit (A.P. Reyes Avenue, Makati City). Derby starts at noon. The hosts, Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola, have put up a guaranteed prize of P300,000. Entry fee is P4,400 and minimum bet is P3,300. The following prizes are also up for grabs: fastest winning time, refrigerator; second, color TV; third to fifth, washing machine; and sixth to 10th, mountain bike. For inquiries, contact 898-3473 and 898-3475.

Who can forget Peter and Gordon?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

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They stand out like sore thumbs.

They love that.

They live to impress, not impress to live.

They know pretty well they get sick due to malnourishment. Or alcoholism. Still, they do it: Not eat properly. Those that are stubborn—living an improper, carefree life—I call as allowing their art to control them instead of them controlling their art.

But there's a ray of hope—at least in the world of music.

Most singers I know today, and members of rock bands or the like, aren't the typical starving artists that I used to know. They now seem OK, unlike the ones I had the fortune to be associated with, from the "flower people era" to the "sandals generation" just a while back.

Music is not merely listening. Music is also food. For the soul and the spirit. It lifts us to heights. It inspires us to do something good.

There was music from my radio while I was doing this.

I am into music again today because of Steve O'Neal, the unflappable dzRJ disc jockey whom I have yet to meet in person so that I can shake his hand. Why, because Steve O'Neal—Danee Samonte in real life—is up to something that should bring our Baby Boomers back to Cloud 9 once more. Steve's recent Chad & Jeremy show is still fresh in the mind.

This time, Steve is bringing in Gordon Waller, the other half of the famed British duo Peter and Gordon, next month.

Who can forget Peter and Gordon?

In the '60s, they had hits like "Woman" and "True Love Ways" that took the country by storm. And how about "A World Without Love"?

Peter and Gordon were among the few who had managed to break the airwaves monopoly of The Beatles, even for only a brief period of time.

Not only is Steve O'Neal bringing in Gordon. Also coming to perform side by side with Gordon are Sixties stars Dennis Yost of Classics IV ("Sunny" and "Traces") and Chris Montez ("The More I See You" and "The Girl from Ipanema").

They've never appeared in the same bill on stage before but Steve O'Neal managed to line up the so-called Golden Legends for a Manila tour after extensive negotiations.

Steve O'Neal said the warm reception heaped by the big crowds on Pat Upton of Spiral Starecase, The Searchers, Friends of Distinction and Chad and Jeremy last year was the key.

"It's the best of three worlds," said O'Neal. "Gordon is British, Dennis is American and Chris is Hispanic. Their music is distinct but we all loved it back in the '60s. Gordon was in Manila with Pete for concerts at the Araneta Coliseum but hasn't been back in nearly 40 years. Dennis and Chris are coming for the first time."

Gordon, Yost and Montez will perform at the Aliw Theater on Feb. 12. Then, Gordon and Yost will sing at the Hard Rock Café in Makati on Feb. 13.

Finally, Gordon and Montez will headline a Valentine's Day show at the Hard Rock Café on Feb. 14.

Tickets for the Aliw concert are available at Ticket World outlets, Tower Record stores, National Bookstore, the Ayala malls and Robinsons at P800, P1500, P2500 and P3200. For ticket details, call 891-9999.

The Hard Rock shows will include dinner and wine. Seats are limited so call in your reservations early at 893-4661 to 64.

I can't wait to watch this blockbuster of a show. Now wait a minute, who'll take the place of Peter when Gordon finally does "A World Without Love"?

Hey, Steve O'Neal, don't look at me.

***

FASTBREAK. Earl "The Pearl" Sapelino, the radio voice in the Tour of Luzon cycling marathon since 1974, is at the Chinese General Hospital ICU after suffering a stroke on Tuesday. A prayer for his quick recovery, plus financial help, will be highly appreciated.

Pacquiao impressive in sparring

Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

IN A happy mood following the arrival of his wife Jinkee and son Emmanuel Jr., reigning Ring Magazine featherweight king Manny Pacquiao flashed blazing form in his first sparring session yesterday.

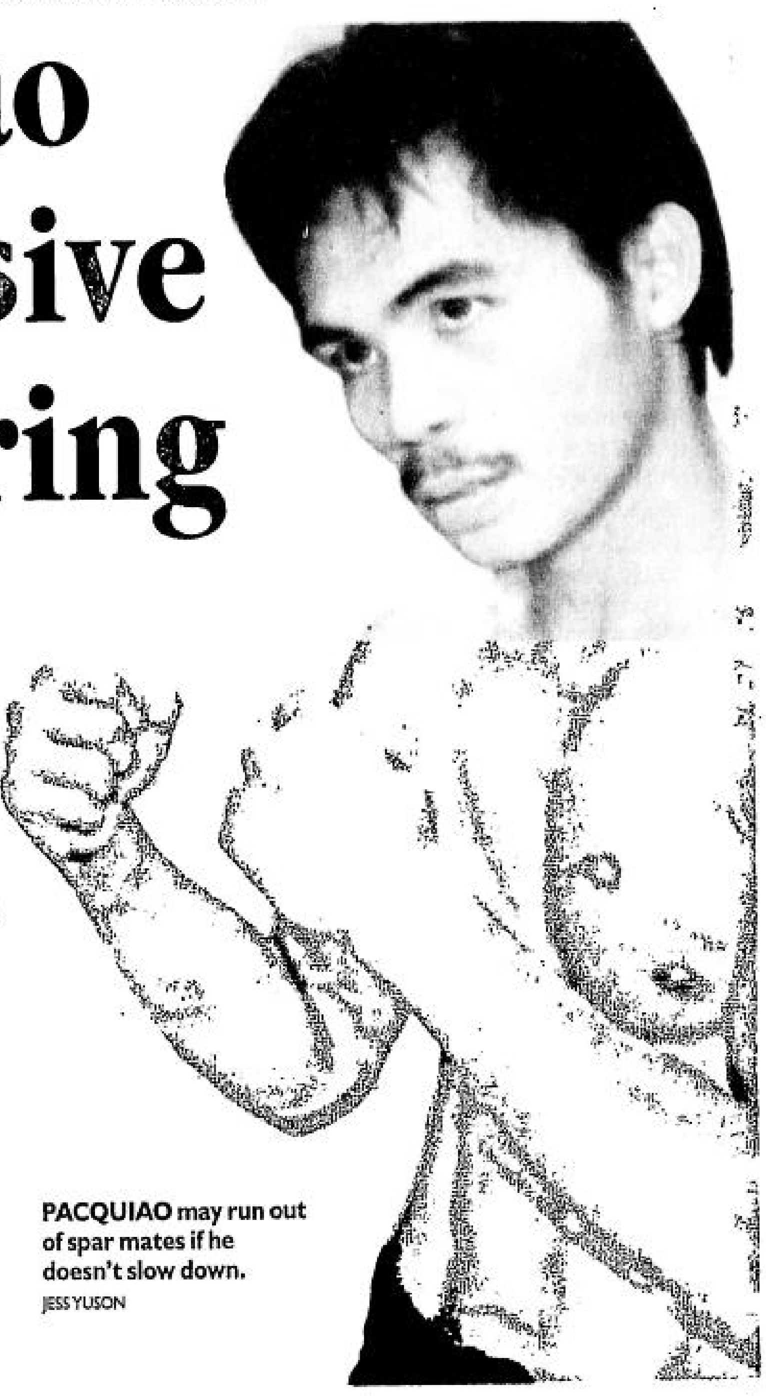
Sources at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles said the Filipino ring hero, who is preparing for his March 19 showdown against Mexican legend Erik Morales at the MGM Grand, proved too much for his first sparring partner, Raymundo "Sugar" Beltran, who almost failed to last three rounds.

Pacquiao, according to the source, proved too fast and strong for Beltran, who suffered from a bruise on his right eyelid following a big left from the Filipino fighter.

"Pacquiao just had to slow down a bit in the second and third round. Beltran could not keep up with his momentum," said the source.

With Pacquiao's dominating form, trainer Freddie Roach reportedly expressed apprehension they might run out of sparring partners once again.

"Last year, Karen Harutyunyan was hurt. I hope it's not going to be deja vu this year," said another source, adding that another spar mate might be tapped when Pacquiao plunges into another sparring session tomorrow.



PACQUIAO may run out of spar mates if he doesn't slow down.
JESS YUSON

Bautista, foe confident of win

WORLD Boxing Organization Asia Pacific bantamweight champion Rey Bautista and challenger Vuyisile Bebe yesterday exchanged fighting words during a press conference for their title fight this Saturday at the Mandaue City Sports and Cultural Complex.

"I am very happy to get the opportunity to fight Bautista. That belt belongs to me. I promise to my folks in South Africa that I am bringing back the belt," said Bebe in the press briefing at the Casino Español in Cebu with promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani, WBO Asia Pacific chair Leon Panoncillo, and Bebe's trainer David Faas.

The 18-year-old Bautista, however, said he's not giving up his title. "I am the champion. Every punch I throw will carry with it the power of the Bohol people. I will win," he vowed.

Faas also held the spotlight, keeping the presscon alive with his one-liners and interesting prediction.

"Game plan will be at 9 p.m. this Saturday," Faas curtly stated, when asked about their game plan against the youthful Bautista.

Asked how they plan to offset Bautista's power, Faas said: "Boxing is not about power. It is about skills. We trained to go 12 rounds for this fight.

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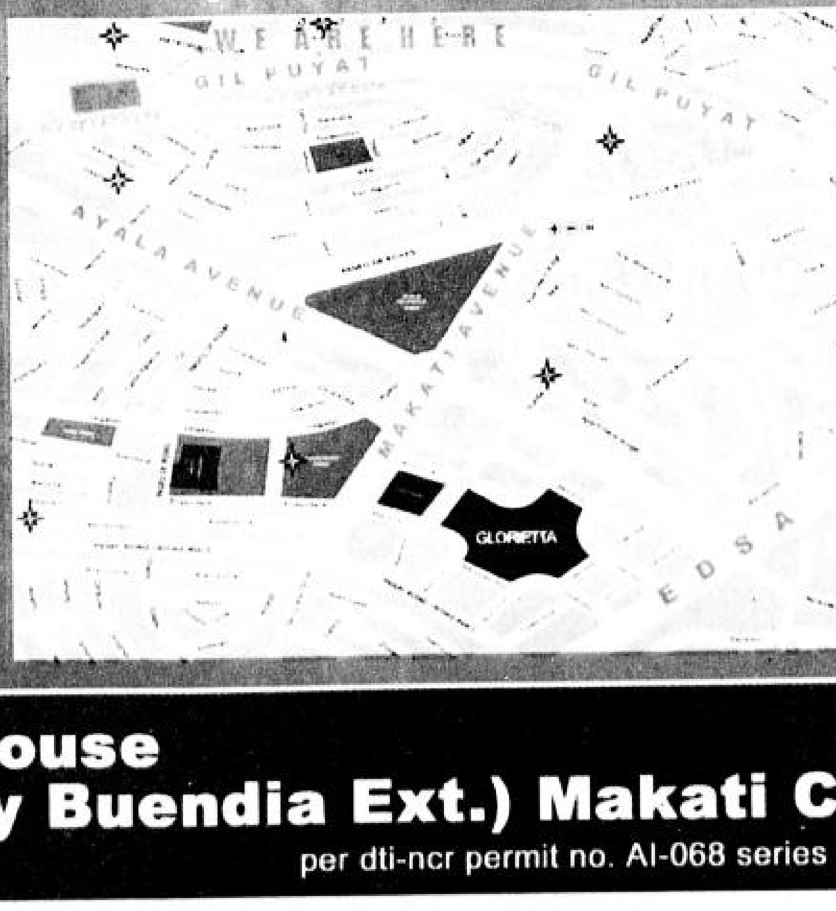

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Aussie Hewitt guts it out

Survives Nalbandian, forges battle vs Roddick

HEWITT: Tough triumph REUTERS

RODDICK: Good mileage AP

MELBOURNE, Australia—Andy Roddick had a much easier run to the Australian Open semifinals than he did two years ago, one that Lleyton Hewitt can only envy.

Averaging just 1 1/2 hours per match, Roddick advanced Wednesday when Russia's Nikolay Davydenko, suffering from breathing problems for the second consecutive match, retired after falling behind, 6-3, 7-5, 4-1.

He next faces third-seeded Hewitt, a 6-3, 6-2, 1-6, 3-6, 10-8 winner over No. 9 David Nalbandian of Argentina in a match that lasted 4 hours and 5 minutes and featured fireworks on and off the court. The other semifinal pairs defending champion Roger Federer and fourth-seeded Marat Safin in a rematch of last year's final.

Hewitt gave the home crowd something to cheer about with his gritty victory, with Australia Day fireworks going off near the arena in the third set.

"I just kept hanging in there," Hewitt said. "I had opportunities to break. In the end, it paid off once again."

There were fireworks on the court, too, as the aggressive, intense Hewitt angered an opponent for the third time in four matches, brushing shoulders with Nalbandian as the two men passed during the crossover after Hewitt broke for a 3-2 lead in the second set. Nalbandian stared at Hewitt, who ran off the next three games.

Nalbandian gathered himself and came back to win the third set, breaking Hewitt in all three of his service games, allowing only four points. Hewitt, who has been nursing a sore right thigh and had problems this time with the left, double-faulted twice to hand Nalbandian a break for a 3-2 lead in the fourth set, and the Argentine leveled the match with another break on a backhand passing shot.

It turned into a contentious battle of survival as both men, disputing a number of line calls, received treatment before the fifth set—Hewitt on his thigh, Nalbandian for a blister on his left foot. It was the 22nd set in five matches for the Argentine, spread over 17 hours.

The 22-year-old Roddick reached the Australian Open semifinals in 2003, losing to Rainer Schuettler after he'd clinched a draining quarterfinal win over Morocco's Younes El Aynaoui with the longest fifth set in Grand Slam history at 21-19.

"It's been pretty smooth sailing so far," said Roddick, who has only dropped one set in five matches. "That could end up being a good thing. I don't have many miles on me so far."

Davydenko complained of breathing problems just before finishing off a straight-sets quarterfinal victory two days ago. He called for the trainer in the second set after Roddick broke him for a 3-2 lead.

"We played a couple really long points and then he made a couple easy errors afterwards, after those long points," Roddick said. "I didn't know if it was coincidence or if he was actually feeling it. When he called the trainer, I figured he had to be struggling a little bit, especially when I saw him with the inhaler. It looked pretty serious."

"It was very hot," Davydenko said. "I couldn't breathe. I cannot run, I cannot control the ball. I don't know what it is."

On the women's side, top-seeded Lindsay Davenport, recovered from a bout of bronchitis she suffered just before the Australian Open, outlasted Olympic bronze medalist Alicia Molik, 10th seed , 6-4, 4-6, 9-7.

She will face France's Nathalie Dechy, who reached a Grand Slam semifinal for the first time after failing to get past the fourth round in 36 previous majors. Dechy, seeded 19th, ousted No. 12 Patty Schnyder, 5-7, 6-1, 7-5.

But while the two women's quarterfinals lasted exactly the same time—2:33—Davenport then headed back out to advance to the doubles finals with Corina Morariu after a three-set victory that took another 1:44. She said she never considered defaulting to improve her singles prospects.

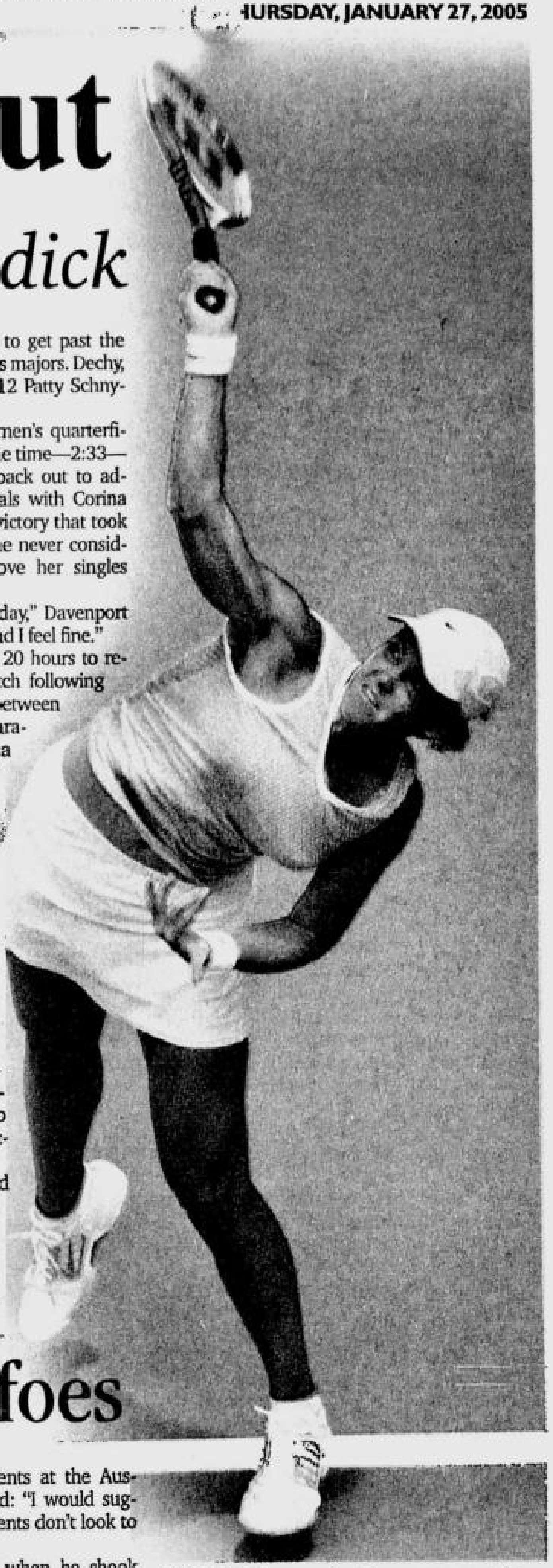
"It's my partner's birthday," Davenport said between matches. "And I feel fine."

She'll have only about 20 hours to recover, with her next match following Thursday's semifinal between fourth-seeded Maria Sharapova and No. 7 Serena Williams—a rematch of last year's Wimbledon final, when the 17-year-old Sharapova won her first Grand Slam title.

"It's tough to come back again tomorrow," Davenport said.

At times, she looked despondent and frustrated, making 40 unforced errors and an uncharacteristic 11 double-faults—including one to give the Australian the second set.

But the 28-year-old American, on the verge of quitting the circuit until surging to No. 1 in the rankings late in 2004, played percentages in the last four games.


LINDSAY Davenport, who was once on the verge of retirement, hammers out a hard-earned quarterfinal victory over Australian hope Alicia Molik. Davenport adavances to the semifinals opposite Natalie Dechy. AP

Agassi has no advice for future Federer foes

MELBOURNE, Australia—Andre Agassi has praised Roger Federer's innate ability to make the court look smaller after his astonishing demolition of the four-time Australian Open winner here Tuesday.

The world No. 1, bidding for his third straight grand slam triumph, crushed eighth-seeded Agassi, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4, in their quarterfinal in 1 hour and 39 minutes to stretch his unbeaten match streak to 26, going back to last August.

Agassi, the 34-year-old eight-time grand slam champion has confronted plenty of challenges over the net in his time, but he marvels at what the 23-year-old Swiss maestro can do on the tennis court.

"He's got anticipation, but it's more about his ability to make a court a lot smaller," Agassi said before leaving for home Wednesday. "Because he can cover so well to the forehand, it really allows him to stay at home in the backhand corner.

"So that backhand corner gets smaller and smaller, and he sort of dares you to hit it to that forehand. There's a lot of times you do and you're thinking that's a good idea, then a second later you're going, 'Why did I do that?'"

Asked what his advice would be to Federer's remaining opponents at the Australian Open, Agassi said: "I would suggest that his next opponents don't look to me for advice. "

Agassi revealed that when he shook hands with Federer at the net, he told the Swiss ace, "too good and good luck."

"He just said he enjoyed playing against me and hopes that happens more. I said, 'That makes one of us.'" *AFP*

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Phoenix Suns rise anew; Kings vent ire on NJ Nets

NEW YORK—Quentin Richardson made seven of Phoenix's 16 3-pointers, Jim Jackson added five shots from behind the arc and the Suns had their highest point total of the season in a 133-118 victory Tuesday over the New York Knicks.

The Suns tied a team record for 3-pointers, the last of which—by Richardson with 1:42 left—ended the Knicks' final chance. Amare Stoudemire scored 29 points, Richardson had 25, Joe Johnson 24 and Shawn Marion 20 for Phoenix.

The loss was the seventh in a row for the Knicks, who obviously have not latched onto new coach Herb Williams' emphasis on defense. The 133 points were the most by a Knicks opponent since Portland scored 141 on Nov. 15, 1990, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. The 16 3-pointers were the most allowed in franchise history.

Bulls 111, Nuggets 107

In Chicago, Kirk Hinrich scored 23 points and Eddy Curry shook off a groin injury to add 14 in the fourth quarter, sending the surging Bulls past Denver for its 11th win in 12 games.

With their fourth straight win in five nights, the Bulls moved two games over .500 after an 0-9 start.

Celtics 97, Bobcats 92

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Paul Pierce scored 33 points to help Boston end its nine-game road losing streak and hand the Bobcats their ninth loss in a row overall.

Pierce, who went 13-for-16 at the foul line, sealed it with a freethrow with 13 seconds to play to give the Celtics a road victory for the first time since Dec. 18 in Cleveland.

Grizzlies 95, Magic 83

In Memphis, Tennessee, Stromile Swift had 18 points and nine rebounds, leading the Grizzlies over Orlando.

Memphis, which had seven players in double figures, outscored the Magic, 20-6, in the final 4:05 to secure its 12th win in 14 games. Orlando lost its second straight and has dropped three of four.

The Grizzlies needed the balanced offense after Pau Gasol, their leading scorer and rebounder, was placed on the injured list earlier in the day with a left foot injury.

Kings 113, Nets 93

In Sacramento, California, Brad Miller had a season-high 31 points and 12 rebounds while making 11 straight shots, and the Kings rebounded from an embarrassing loss by routing New Jersey.

Peja Stojakovic scored 25 points and Cuttino Mobley had 20 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds for the Kings, who made a season-best 55 percent of their shots and recovered nicely from their worst home loss in nine years. San Antonio beat them, 103-73, Sunday night, snapping a six-game winning streak.

Miller thrived in the absence of Chris Webber, who sat out with a sprained right ankle. Mike Bibby had 19 points—including four 3-pointers—and 10 assists.

SuperSonics 104, Lakers 93

In Los Angeles, Vladimir Radmanovic scored all but two of his 26 points on eight 3-pointers, as the Sonics beat the Lakers, 104-93. *AP*

AAK tilt goes to Pampanga

THE FOURTH leg of this season's AAK Invitational Age-Group Karatedo Tournament Series has been moved to SM City Pampanga on Sunday.

The event, also dubbed as the Milo-AAK Super Karate Kids@SM Supermalls starts at 10 a.m. This was announced by the organizing Association for the Advancement of Karatedo (AAK).

Two more legs are scheduled at SM City North Edsa on Feb. 27 and SM Megamall on March 6 before the Grand Championships on April 2-3 in SM City Cagayan de Oro.

Trophies and medals donated by Nestle Milo will be awarded to the winners.

The series of tournaments is sanctioned by the Philippine Karatedo Federation (PKF) in cooperation with SM Supermalls, Nestle Milo and Island Photo.

For further information, please contact AAK Fitness System, 5/F Bldg. B SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, tel. nos. (02) 635-6608/ (02) 635-6611, fax nos. (020) 805-4006/ (02) 635-6612 or send an e-mail to aakarate@pldtdsl.net or aakarate@mindgate.com.ph. Visit the web site at www.aak-karate.com.

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Lone Fil-Am bet makes it to 'Fame' finals

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN we viewed the first telecast of the new talent search show, "Fame," we were disheartened to see that only one Fil-Am 99 talent had survived its audition phase and moved into the show's semi-finals.

We weren't even sure if she was Filipino, since all we had to go by was her family name, Tiangco. Still, we 'continued to hope.

Well, last Friday, it was revealed that Jamisen Tiangco was indeed a Fil-Am talent, so we wished her all the best as she competed in the tilt's second group of six semi-finalists.

Since the show's best bets were uniformly outstanding singer-dancers, Jamisen had her work cut out for her to end up among the second batch's three survivors.

When she started to perform her solo number, we were disappointed because her singing voice, while tuneful, wasn't particularly strong. This could be a liability, since most of the other semi-finalists had powerful, "show-stopper" singing voices.

In addition, Jamisen looked a little overweight, while many other female semi-finalists had great bodies. Could this be another dampener as far as her "survival" chances were concerned?

On the other hand, our lone Fil-Am bet was very pretty and her total projection was very appealing. And she danced pretty well, too. So, she *could* make it.

Our hopes flew higher when the tilt's three celebrity judges reacted to Jamisen's performance. Their comments were uniformly positive, and some of them were even ecstatic:

"You light up the stage." "Your performance was vibrant and consistently focused." "You've made a *big* impression on me." "I love you, will you marry me?!"

That last reaction, from an obviously smitten male judge.

To balance the equation, the judges did note that Jamisen needed more vocal training, and her performance was marred by some miscues. On the whole, however, the judges made it clear that Jamisen's number had bowled them over.

Would this be enough to make her one of the evening's three winners who would get into the finals' field of 12? We sure hoped so. After all, she was our lone bet in the competition.

We tapped Jamisen as one of our winners that night, along with two standout black performers, Brandon and Serena. Well, when the judges' decision was finally announced, their verdict agreed with ours!

So, Jamisen Tiangco is now in the finals of "Fame," which will unspool in three weeks' time, after the winners of the last two semi-finalist rounds are chosen.

The finals phase will be decided at least in part by text votes, so Jamisen could enjoy an advantage in this regard, since the US's Fil-Am population is known for its text-voting "power" (as "American Idol's" Jasmine Trias and Camile Velasco will attest).

So, our hopes remain high—and congratulations, Jamisen Tiangco!

LONE/ A24

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1 ELEKTRA	1 WHITE NOISE	1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 MEET THE FOCKERS 1:20, 3:50, 6:20, 8:50, 11:20	1 ELEKTRA
2 MEET THE FOCKERS	2 ELEKTRA	2 ELEKTRA	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 ELEKTRA 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	2 MEET THE FOCKERS
3 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE	3 MEET THE FOCKERS	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 ELEKTRA 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 ELEKTRA 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00, 11:15	3 SUPER BABIES: BABY GENIUSES 2
4 OCEAN'S 12	4 KUNG FU HUSTLE	4 OCEAN'S 12	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30, 11:30	4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE		5 KUNG FU HUSTLE	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 OCEAN'S 12 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30	5
		6 MEET THE FOCKERS		
		7 WHITE NOISE		

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 MEET THE FOCKERS 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40
2 ELEKTRA 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45

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January 14 to 31
Per DTI NCR Permit No. A2-016, Series of 2005

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AYALA CENTER ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU Lovemall!

Lone Fil-Am bet makes it to 'Fame' finals

From page A23

JAMISEN TIANGCO

'Science of Tsunami'

At 5 a.m. and 1 p.m. today, Discovery Channel is screening "The Next Wave: Science of Tsunami." Since Tsunamis are very much in the news these days, this documentary is a should-see.

It is an unprecedented exploration into the cataclysmic disaster that shook the coastlines of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and Somalia last Dec. 26.

The documentary features exclusive interviews with three geophysicists who were at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center when the underwater earthquake 19 miles below the surface of the Indian Ocean was detected. Also featured are emotional accounts from survivors in different countries.

The production also investigates the theory that a massive landslide could cause an even bigger tsunami in the future. The mega-tsunami could hit the east coast of the US, causing devastation more than 20 km inland.

With so much at stake, and so little warning, the pressure is now on science to find a way to get one step ahead of tsunamis.

Viewers of the documentary will also learn how the Pacific Warning System works, and hear geologists' hopeful views on the future.

"Science of Tsunami" will be replayed at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Jan. 31, and at 1 p.m. on Feb. 2.

Movies on TV

On Cinemax today at 9 a.m., "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" 3:45 p.m., "The Man Who Knew Too Much." 7:30 p.m., "High School High." 2:45 a.m., "The Fabulous Baker Boys." Jan. 28 at 8:30 a.m., "Orange County." 1:45 p.m., "Mrs. Winterbourne." 10:30 p.m., "The People vs Larry Flynt."

On HBO today at 12:15 p.m., "Mission Impossible." Jan. 28 at 11:45 p.m., "Live From Baghdad."

Acoustic, band music in Star malls

WATCH and listen to performances by some of the country's up-and-coming acoustic talents at the Star Group of Malls.

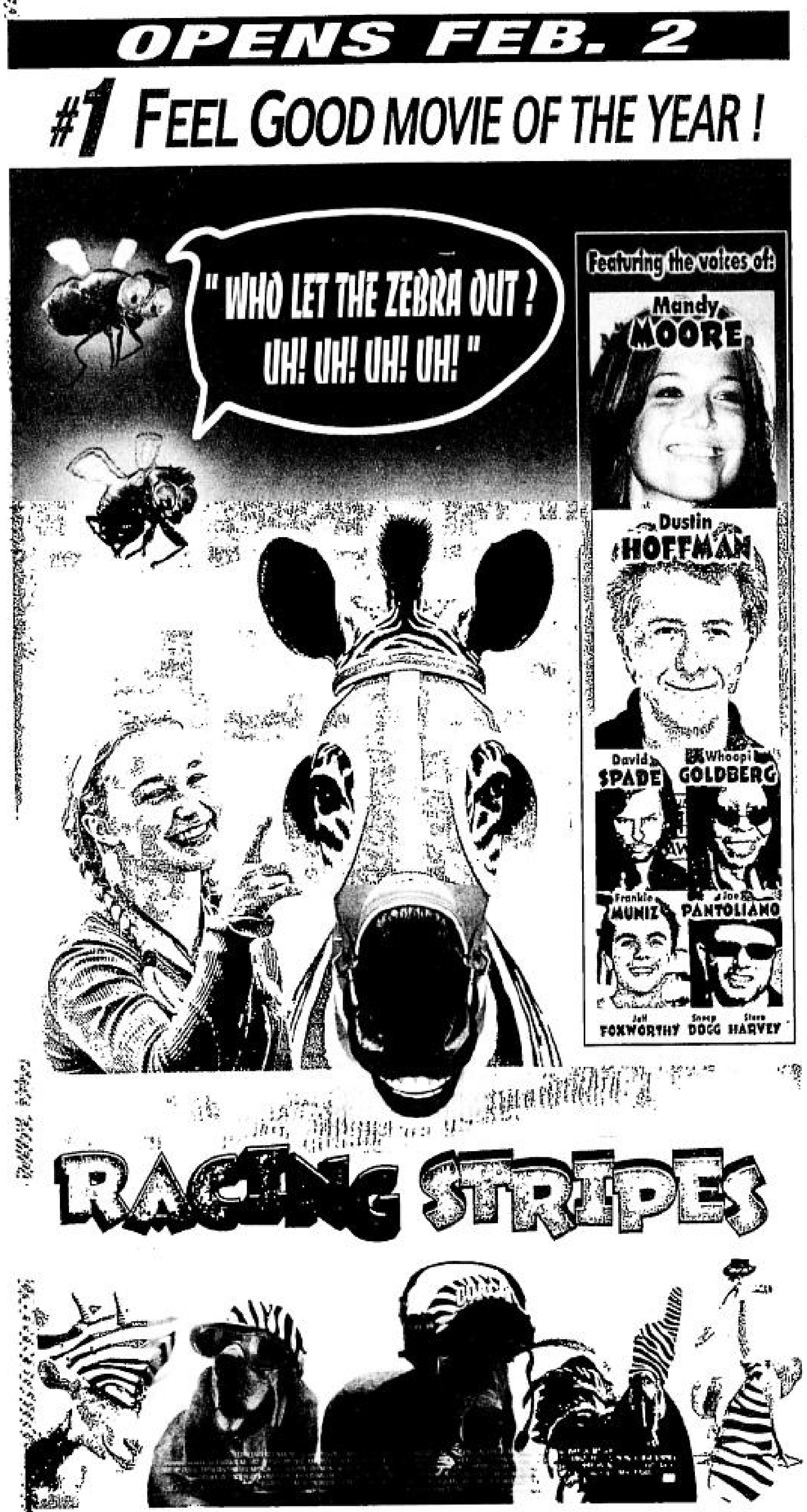
Enjoy acoustic and live band music every Wednesday on the second level of the Nightlife Bar of Metropolis Star Alabang, while enjoying a cup of coffee at the Kinse Lang Coffee shop.

At Starmall Edsa, acoustic jam sessions on the third level bridgeway happen every Wednesday and Friday, from 7:30 p.m. onward, featuring regular performers Bittersweet Symphony, Acoustic Playhouse and the Haraya Band.

Starmall Las Piñas' al fresco dining strip comes to life with acoustic performances nightly at Marks Sports Bar on the second level and Figaro on the ground floor.

Enjoy draft beer every Friday at Starmall Las Piñas for only P10.

The Star Group of Malls is composed of Starmall Edsa, Metropolis Star Alabang and Starmall Las Piñas.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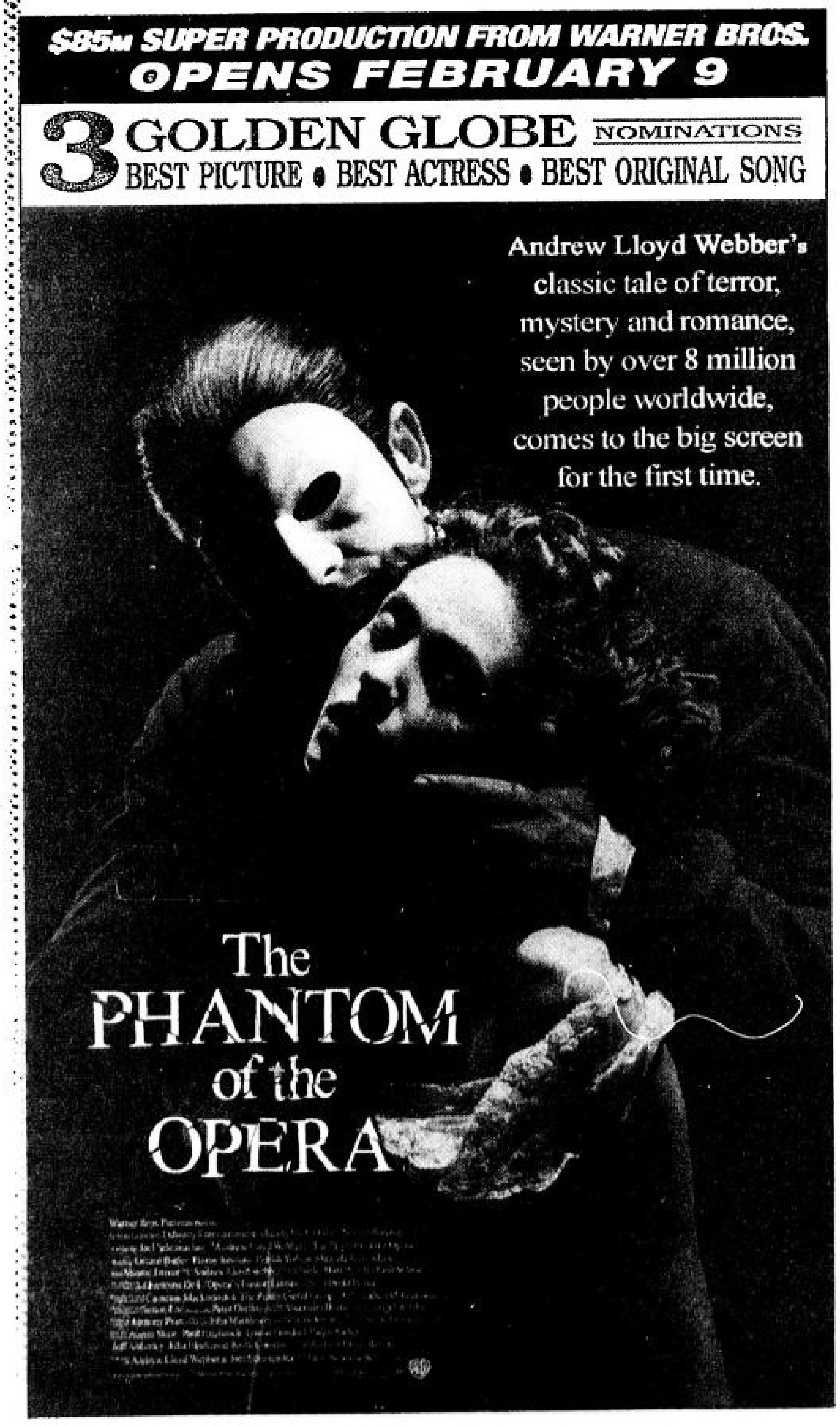
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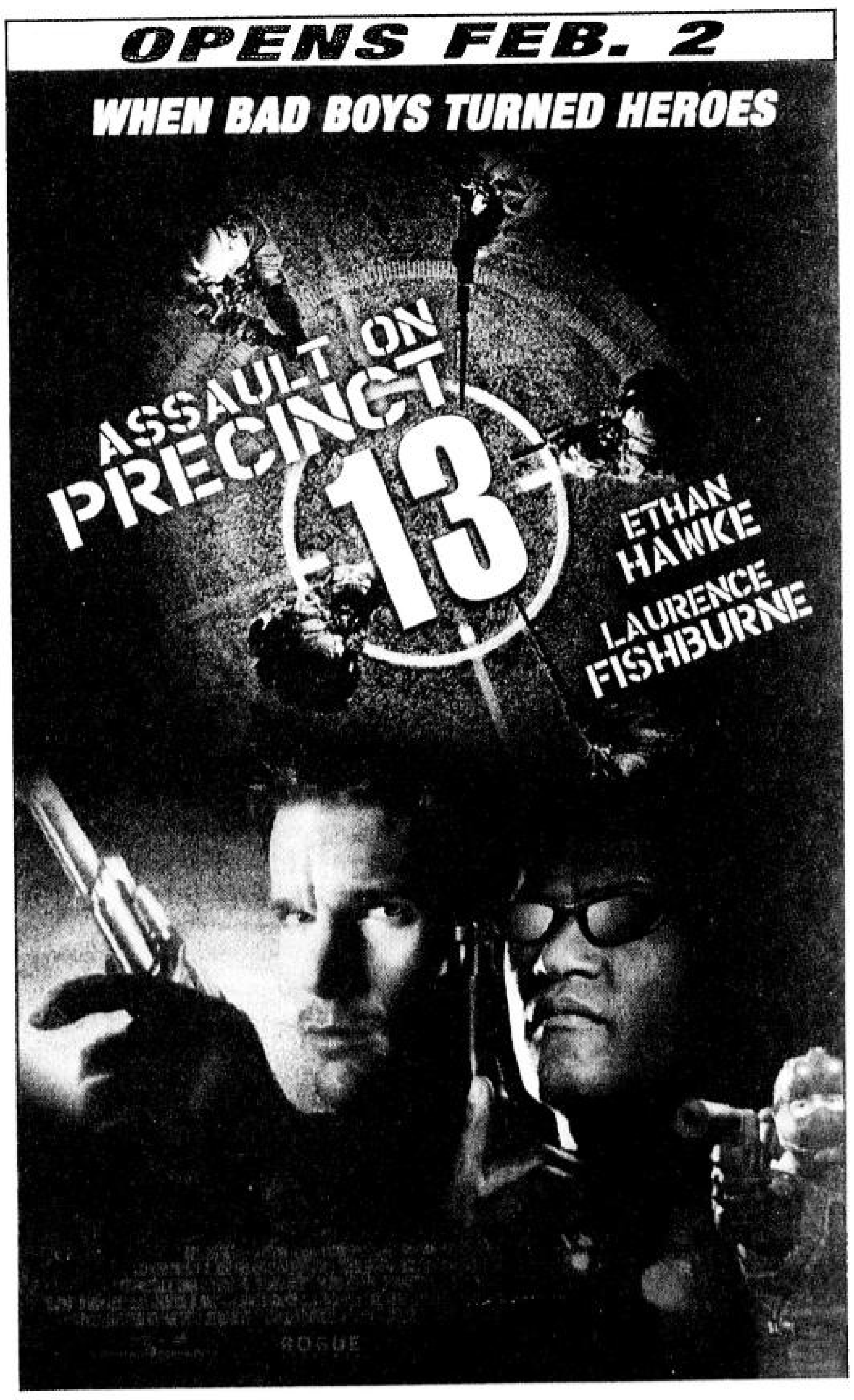

OPENS FEB. 2
WHEN BAD BOYS TURNED HEROES
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
ETHAN HAWKE
LAURENCE FISHBURNE
ROGUE

OWEN

PORTMAN

MADSEN

LINNEY

CHURCH

'Aviator'...

From page A26

winner. Considered a nominal best-picture favorite, "The Aviator" offers him a shot to finally triumph on Oscar night, though Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby" is a formidable competitor.

"The Aviator" won the Golden Globe for best-dramatic film, but Eastwood beat out Scorsese for the directing prize at the Globes.

Eastwood is a past Oscar winner for best-picture and director with 1992's "Unforgiven."

Along with Foxx in "Collateral," Alda was nominated for supporting actor as a senator tussling with Hughes in "The Aviator" while Freeman was picked as a worldly wise ex-boxer in "Million Dollar Baby."

The other nominees: Thomas Haden Church as a bridegroom out for a final fling in "Sideways"; Clive Owen as a coarse lover in "Closer."

For supporting actress, academy voters picked Blanchett, who plays Katharine Hepburn in "The Aviator"; Laura Linney as the title character's sexually adventurous wife in "Kinsey"; Virginia Madsen as a deceived lover in "Sideways"; Sophie Okonedo as innkeeper Rusesabagina's wife in "Hotel Rwanda"; Natalie Portman as a gutsy stripper in "Closer." *AP*

Changes coming to 'Eat... Bulaga!'

EXPECT a lot of improvements in the country's most beloved noontime show, "Eat ... Bulaga!"

The changes are being kept secret for now, but viewers can expect amazing giveaways and innovative segments leading up to Saturday, Jan. 29.

A hint of what's to come:

"Eat ... Bulaga!" will most likely set a Philippine record for the amount of cash that can be potentially won in a two-hour-plus telecast from Monday to Saturday.

There's also the brand-new romantic match-up segment, "Heart to Get," which adds a playful twist to the game involving a search for love.

"Eat ... Bulaga!" has always been at the forefront of popularizing the newest pop culture trends, like songs and dance crazes. "Harlem" was launched just days ago on the show, and it has already created a stir.

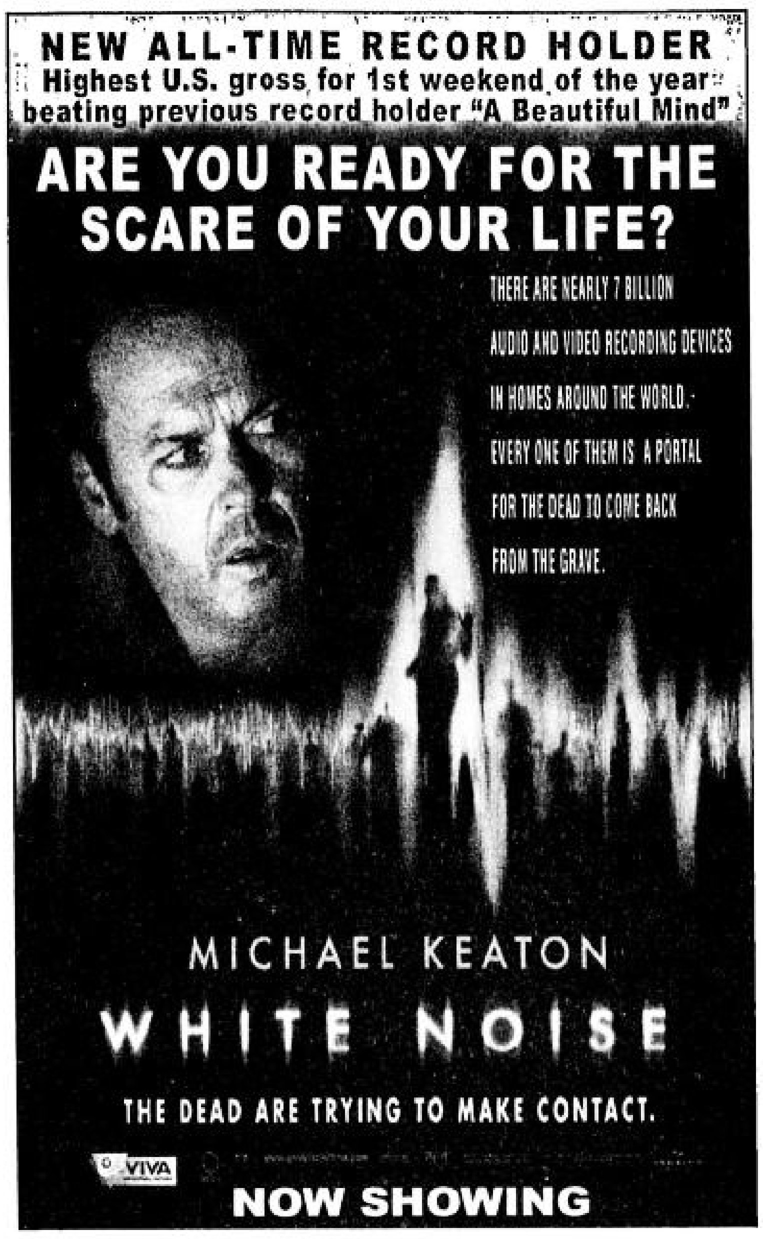
Featuring seemingly bone-crushing dance moves from Harlem, New York, the new contest is now showcasing the talents of male Pinoy teeners nationwide.

Watch and see how talented your boys have to be to make it big in this footloose fest.

"Eat ... Bulaga!" blends tradition and innovation to give viewers a show that's always in tune with the times. But whatever the national mood, "Bulaga" has always been making Filipinos happy, whether it's by making contestants instant millionaires in "Laban o Bawi or ticking viewers through the "Bulagaan" and the antics and ad libs of its funny hosts.

To see how a great show can get even better and better, simply keep watching.

A bigger, better "Eat ... Bulaga!" is only a day away.


NEW ALL-TIME RECORD HOLDER
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ARE YOU READY FOR THE SCARE OF YOUR LIFE?
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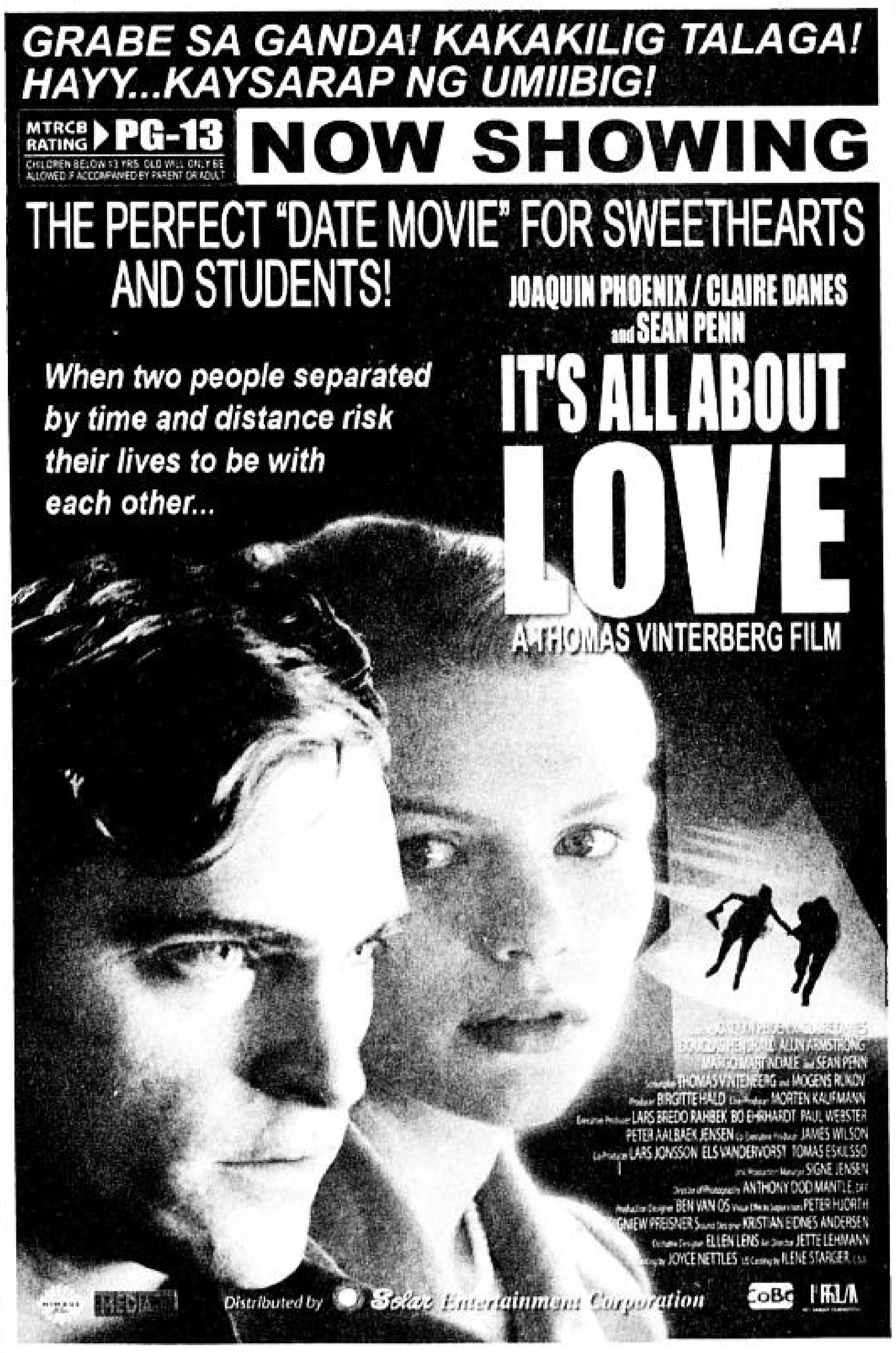
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SIGNE JENSEN
ANTHONY DOD MANTLE
BEN VAN OS PETER HJORTH
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ELLEN LENS JETTE LEHMANN
JOYCE NETTLES ILENE STARGER
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time	27 thu	28 fri
10 am - 12:30 pm	CHILD-FRIENDLY FILM PROGRAM	CHILD-FRIENDLY FILM PROGRAM
12:30 pm - 3 pm	MAGNIFICO by Maryo J. de los Reyes w/ short film ANAK MAYNILA	MAGNIFICO by Maryo J. de los Reyes w/ short film ANAK MAYNILA
3 pm - 5:30 pm	MAYOR ANDAL w/ Cebuano short film	CEBUANO DIGITAL WORKS
6 pm - 8 pm	MANOK NI SAN PEDRO by Jose Macachor w/ Cebuano short film	RILES by Ditsi Carolino
8 pm - 10:30 pm	BAKAO KO, MAHAL KO by Arden Tabunda (Baguio) & BACOLOD "PIAYA" VIDEOS	RED SAGA (Southern Luzon) DIHON, BATCHOYAN SA BANWA (Iloilo) A BOAT IN DEEP WATERS (Davao)

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8pm RED SAGA by Kiri Dalena (Southern Luzon)
DIHON by Allan Cabalfin (Iloilo)
BATCHOYAN SA BANWA by Eileen Ocampo
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by Teng Mangansakan (Davao)
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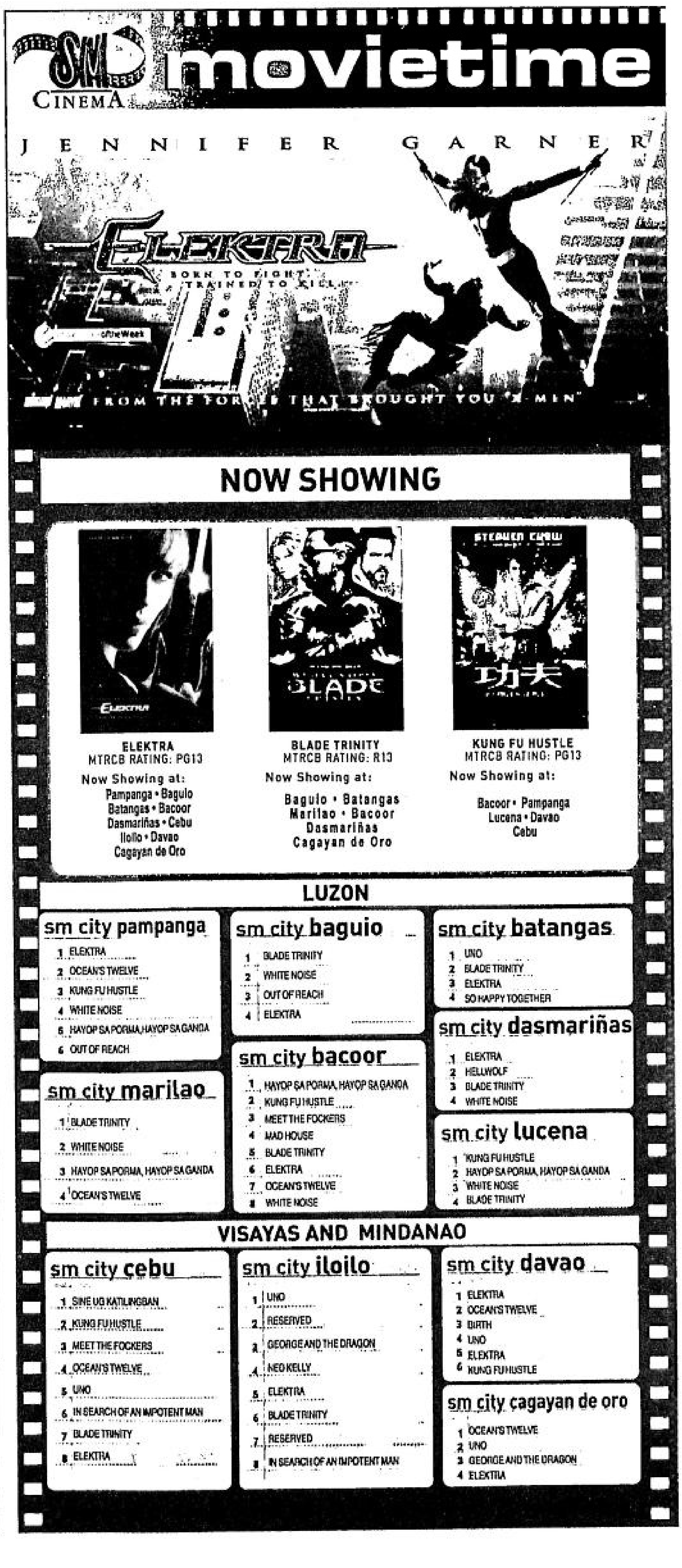
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2 OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 WHITE NOISE
5 HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
6 OUT OF REACH
sm city marilao
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 WHITE NOISE
3 HAYOP SA PORMA, HAYOP SA GANDA
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE
sm city baguio
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 WHITE NOISE
3 OUT OF REACH
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2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 MAD HOUSE
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 ELEKTRA
7 OCEAN'S TWELVE
8 WHITE NOISE
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2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ELEKTRA
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3 BLADE TRINITY
4 WHITE NOISE
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3 WHITE NOISE
4 BLADE TRINITY
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2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 MEET THE FOCKERS
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE
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6 BLADE TRINITY
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8 IN SEARCH OF AN IMPOTENT MAN
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2 OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 BIRTH
4 UNO
5 ELEKTRA
6 KUNG FU HUSTLE
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1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 UNO
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
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⑦ Elektra

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SWANK

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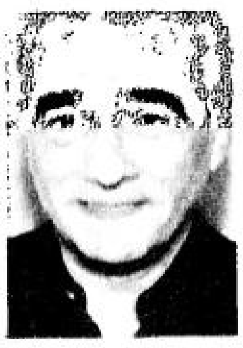

SCORSESE

EASTWOOD

'Aviator,' 11; 'Million Dollar Baby,' 'Neverland,' 7 each

BEVERLY HILLS, California—The Howard Hughes epic "The Aviator" led Academy Awards contenders with 11 nominations Tuesday, including best picture among them, plus acting honors for Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett and Alan Alda and a directing slot for Martin Scorsese.

The boxing saga "Million Dollar Baby" and the J.M. Barrie tale "Finding Neverland" followed with seven nominations each, among best picture and acting nominations for Clint Eastwood, Morgan Freeman, Hilary Swank and Johnny Depp.

Eastwood also got a directing nomination for "Million Dollar Baby."

Front-runner

The other best-picture nominees were the Ray Charles portrait "Ray" and the buddy comedy "Sideways."

Along with Eastwood, Jamie Foxx also scored two nominations, as best actor for the title role in "Ray" and supporting actor as a taxi driver whose cab is hijacked by a hit man in "Collateral."

Foxx's dead-on emulation of Charles has made him the front-runner in the lead-actor category.

Starring as aviation trailblazer and Hollywood rebel Hughes, DiCaprio also was nominated for best actor.

DiCaprio and Foxx will compete against Depp as "Peter Pan" playwright Barrie in "Finding Neverland"; Eastwood as a cantankerous boxing trainer in "Million Dollar Baby"; and Don Cheadle for "Hotel Rwanda," starring as hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina, who sheltered refugees from the Rwandan genocide.

Showdown repeat

The best-actress category presents a rematch of the 1999 showdown, when underdog Swank won the Oscar for "Boys Don't Cry" over Annette Bening, who had been the front-runner for "American Beauty."

This time, Swank was nominated as a bullheaded boxing champ whose life takes a cruel twist in "Million Dollar Baby."

Bening was chosen for "Being Julia," in which she plays an aging 1930s stage diva exacting wickedly comic revenge on the men in her life and a young rival.

Both actresses won Golden Globes for the roles, Swank for best dramatic actress, Bening for actress in a musical or comedy.

Also nominated for the best-actress Oscar were Catalina Sandino Moreno as a Colombian woman imperiled when she signs on to smuggle heroin in "Maria Full of Grace"; Imelda Staunton as a saintly housekeeper in 1950s Britain who performs illegal abortions on the side in "Vera Drake"; and Kate Winslet as a woman who has had memories of her ex-boyfriend erased in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

Joining Eastwood and Scorsese among directing nominees are Taylor Hackford for "Ray"; Mike Leigh for "Vera Drake"; and Alexander Payne for "Sideways."

Shot at triumph

Scorsese, arguably the most prominent modern filmmaker who has never won an Oscar, also has never delivered a best-picture

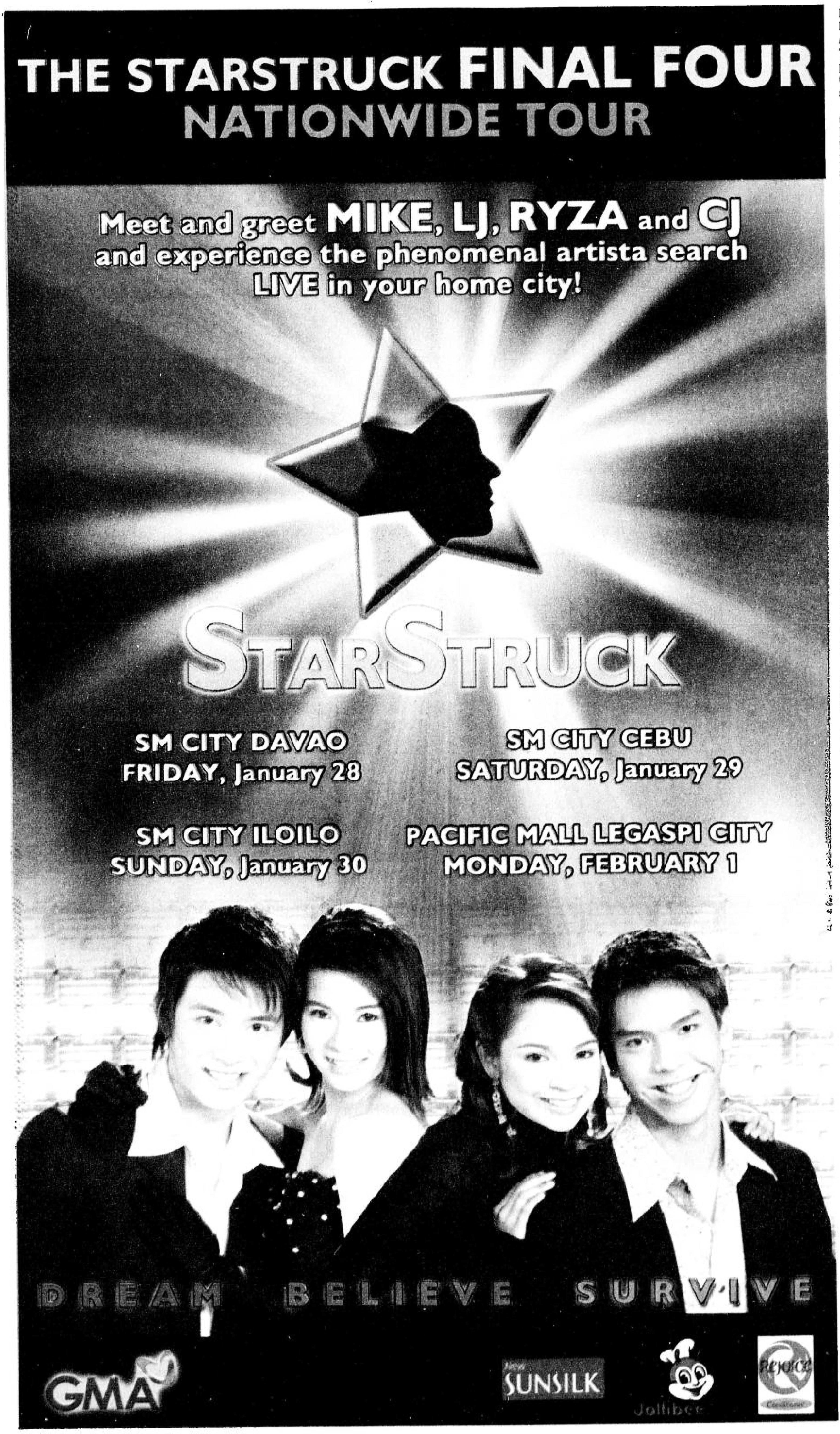
AVIATOR/ A25

ALDA

FREEMAN

DEPP

BLANCHETT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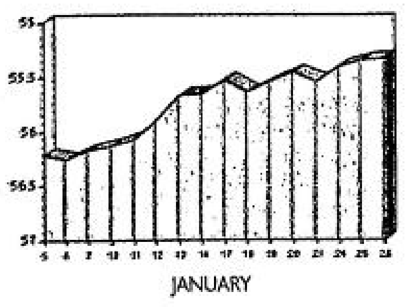


₱ 55.33 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 26, 2005

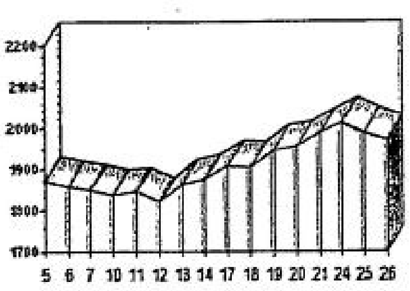
¥ 103.64 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 26, 2005

GOLD: $ 426.80-427.30
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 25, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares close 1.01% lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE prices closed 1.01 percent lower yesterday as profit-taking continued following four days of gains that brought the index to five-year highs, dealers said.

They said investors expected further consolidation in coming sessions but welcomed this as a healthy opportunity for the market to catch its breath after recent advances.

The composite index closed down 20.01 points to 1,970.28 after trading between 1,967.55 and 1,993.67.

Volume totaled 5.62 billion shares worth P1.69 billion from 6.68 billion shares worth P1.75 billion on Tuesday.

The broader all-shares index fell 2.90 points to 1,164.01.

Gainers beat losers 63 to 38, with 47 stocks unchanged.

"We feel there will first be some consolidation before investors will start picking up the bargains," said Lawrence De Leon of Accord Capital Equities Inc.

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities said the market's correction may continue for a few more sessions.

He said the decline was healthy, as it reduced the possibility of a major drop in share prices following last week's rapid gains.

"The Philippine market has the mind of its own right now," De Leon said, citing how local shares had ignored early gains

SHARES/ B4

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage group, yesterday said it would borrow up to $1.85 billion to acquire up to 100 percent of Australia's National Foods Ltd.

San Miguel submitted a $1.4-billion bid for the Australian dairy group in December, topping a bid by New Zealand dairy giant Fonterra.

"The company confirms that it has entered into a commitment letter pursuant to which lenders have agreed to arrange financing on an underwritten basis of up to $1.85 billion for the acquisition of up to 100 percent of the shares in National Foods Ltd. of Australia," SMC said in a statement to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

INQUIRER sources said yesterday that five banks have agreed to lend to SMC, namely ABN Amro Holding NV, Barclays Plc, HSBC Holdings Plc., Standard Chartered Plc. and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

On Monday, Fonterra said it would extend the offer period for its $1.2-billion bid for National Foods, Australia's biggest milk producer, to Feb. 15 from Feb. 1.

National Foods is also Australia's biggest milk processor. Its products include milk, yoghurt, gourmet cheese and cream. The board of National Foods unanimously backed SMC's offer and recommended that stockholders accept the offer in the absence of a superior proposal.

SMC, 20-percent owned by Kirin Brewery Co. of Japan, had earlier said it would fund the bid from new debt facilities and existing cash on hand.

SMC, which had debts of about P32 billion at the end of September 2004, has also said it would launch a rights issue that could raise about $323 million, which could help it cover the cost of the National Foods acquisition.

It has said it wanted to double the revenue contribution of its international business to at least 30 percent. SMC dominates its home market in beer, liquor, soft drinks, processed food and poultry products.

In August, SMC bought half of privately held Berri Ltd., Australia's biggest juice maker.

In the past 18 months, it has also bought a Thai brewery for $102 million, acquired a Malaysian packaging firm, formed a joint venture with a Singapore coffee business, and forged lease agreements for production facilities in Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand.

SMC said it saw major opportunities in line with its regional leap after it announced its bid for control of National Foods.

For one, should its takeover flourish, SMC is looking at possible synergies with Berri Ltd., which could be its flagship juice brand for Australia. It is also studying ice cream production in the region after it relaunched last year its Magnolia ice cream brand, one of the most recognizable and enduring brands in the Philippines, in response to public demand.

SMC also owns 100 percent of Australian beer brewer J. Boag & Sons Ltd. which generates roughly $10 million in net profit a year.

Gov't floats $1B worth of bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT floated $1 billion worth of dollar-denominated bonds yesterday, putting to test the international market's reception of Philippine debt paper for the first time after the country suffered from a recent credit-rating downgrade.

The Department of Finance said the $1 billion it intended to raise from the bond float would be used to start filling in the national government's financing requirement for 2005.

This year, the government targets to borrow $4 billion from the foreign capital market to finance expenditures that cannot be covered by its scant revenues. Of the $4 billion, $1 billion will be used for the expenditure requirements of state-owned and financially bleeding National Power Corp.

According to Finance Undersecretary Eric Recto, the bonds have a 25-year tenor, therefore maturing in 2030. He declined to disclose other details, such as pricing, while the bond trading was still ongoing as of press time.

Banking and market sources said the Philippines was expected to price the deal at a yield of 9.875 percent later yesterday during New York trading. Citigroup, Deutsche Bank and UBS are the joint bookrunners of the offering.

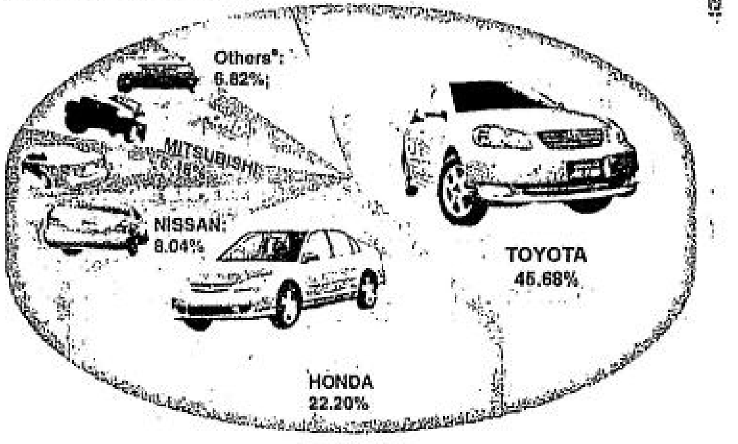
The deal has so far attracted $500 million of orders, one source said.

GOV'T/ B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Market share of car companies[A] (2004, in percent)



[A] 2003 Market shares: Toyota=46.4%, Honda=22.9%, Nissan=9.5%; General Motors (GM)=3.6%, Mitsubishi=7.4%, Ford=4.3%, others=6.0%

*Other car companies include: Asian Carmakers Corp. (BMW), Hyundai Asia Resources; Columbian Autocar Corp., Scandinavian Motors Corp. (Volvo), PGA Cars Inc. (Porsche), Commercial Motors Corp.

Source: Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc.

TOTAL 2004 sales of passenger cars improved by 36.9 percent to 33,182 units. Toyota still topped the list, capturing almost half of the entire market. Honda had close to half of Toyota's share while the combined shares of Nissan, General Motors, Mitsubishi, Ford and others accounted for less than half of the market.

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Coco producers wage war vs American soybean group

By Christine A. Gaylican

LOCAL coconut producers are preparing to go to war against the American Soybean Association over its attempts to picture coconut oil as a health threat to consumers.

The Philippine Coconut Oil Producers Association Inc. (Pcopa) closed ranks with the United Coconut Association of the Philippines Inc. (Ucap) and the Department of Agriculture, due to moves by the US-based soybean producers' to classify coconut oil under the category of saturated fats from animals under the United States Food and Drug Association's food labeling requirements beginning January 2006.

"This may further cut down the country's export of edible coconut oil to the US," said Pcopa president Raul Ostrea in a press briefing.

Ostrea noted that coconut oil may be classified as plant saturated fat, and should be distinguished from the animal saturated fat—the large intake of which poses a health risk to consumers.

"We at the industry express outrage over the longstanding campaign of the US soybean industry to the detriment of the Philippine coconut industry," he said.

The Philippine coconut industry had been taking a beating from the US-based soybean producers over the last 20 years, which led to the decline in the country's export of edible oils to the US market.

PCA Administrator Evangeline Valbuena said that the replacement of coconut oil with soybean oil in the American food market has adversely affected the country as coconut oil remains a major dollar earner.

"Over the years, we have estimated that the smear campaign has actually curbed potential earnings by $1 billion," added Ostrea.

PCA Administrator Valbuena also said that it is in this light that Department of Agriculture and the Philippine coconut industry need to embark on a public information campaign to discuss the benefits of coconut oil.

Gov't to keep Naia 3 fees at par with old terminals'

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communication yesterday said the government may give in to the request of Philippine Airlines and other carriers to keep aviation fees at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 at par with those of Naia 1 and 2.

"We are evaluating the requests of PAL and other airlines for us not to increase fees and charges at Naia Terminal 3, so that they would agree to move to the new terminal," said Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

Flag carrier PAL currently uses the Naia terminal 2 for its integrated domestic and international flight operations, while other airlines use terminal 1.

There is reluctance on the part of the airlines to transfer their operations to the new terminal, as they believe they will be charged more so that the government can recover the cost of building the terminal.

The government has yet to compensate private firm Philippine International Air Terminal Corp. for putting up the terminal.

The Arroyo administration is also spending about P700 million more to upgrade Naia 3, which will cover the construction of a peripheral road connecting Terminal 3 to the older airports, including the cargo warehouse near Naia 1.

The government said it could open Naia 3 for commercial operations by June, after taking over the facility late last month amid unresolved arbitration cases against the private group that built the terminal.

He also said that bidding out Naia 3 to a private firm that would take over operations was still a long way off.

"The immediate plan is to pay just compensation, operate the terminal then bid it out eventually," he said.

Mendoza said ongoing inspection of Terminal 3 should ensure that the facility is structurally sound.

The government earlier said Naia 3 had more than 40 construction defects.

Naia 3 is designed to handle 28 aircraft at once and 13 million passengers a year.

P306-M road projects along C5 completed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority has completed two infrastructure projects along the C5 road, which are expected to ease vehicular traffic to and from the Bonifacio Global City.

The completed projects were the P254-million Sampaguita West Ramps 1 and 2 and the P52-million Collector Distribution (CD) road, according to a BCDA statement.

BCDA project manager Reino Stephen Ayo said that with the opening of the two projects, commuters now have more ways of getting in and out of the Fort.

Before the opening of the Sampaguita West Ramp 1 and the CD road, commuters from the north plying the C5 southbound lane have only one route to the Fort—the Mabini off-ramp that connects to the 32nd street and stretches all the way to the Kalayaan Flyover.

With the opening of the Market! Market! Mall, the volume of vehicles entering the Fort has increased, forcing traffic to build up.

Ramp 1 and CD road will give a more direct route to the southwest area of the Fort, that includes the Market! Market! Mall.

The Sampaguita West Ramp 2, on the other hand, will give commuters a southbound exit route from the southeast side of the Fort.

Last September, BCDA said it had started implementing two infrastructure projects worth P46.8 million in support of the mall and a high-end residential project.

One is the P35-million street lighting project that covers a total of 2.24 kilometers of streets along the Market! Market! mall and Serendra residential complex.

Another is the P11.8-million widening of the Sampaguita Bridge, which is seen to accommodate increased volume of vehicles going to and from C5 road and the Bonifacio Global City.

Gov't floats . . .

From page B1

The launch of the US-dollar global bonds pushed through as scheduled despite the downgrade of the Philippines' credit rating by international ratings firm Standard & Poor's this month.

S&P downgraded the country's foreign currency debt rating to BB- from BB, but kept its "stable" outlook on the country. The ratings firm cited the Philippines' standing fiscal problem, including a yawning budget deficit and burgeoning debt, as a reason for the downgrade.

A credit-rating downgrade normally increases a government's borrowing cost, as creditors use the rating as a reason to seek higher interest rates. Earlier estimates said the government's foreign borrowing cost could go up by as much as P30 billion a result of the downgrade.

Recto, however, earlier said that the downgrade need not hamper the government's foreign borrowing plans because it was not expected to significantly stir the market. He said the market had already factored in the downgrade even before it actually happened.

The government is also seen timing the foreign borrowing before the US Federal Reserve increases its own interest rate in February.

The US Fed is expected to raise its rate anew, probably by another 25 basis points to 2.5 percent. The Federal Reserve implemented a series of rate increases last year, pushing its rate to the current 2.25 percent from only one percent.

A higher US interest rate encourages investors to place their money in perceivably less risky US debt paper, therefore making it advantageous for countries like the Philippines to launch bonds while US interest rate is still low.

Outgoing Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong earlier said the DOF was taking on the principle of "opportunistic borrowing" to prevent bloating the country's already huge debts.

She said the DOF would time commercial borrowings offshore when interest rates were favorable. The DOF would commit to available official development assistance (ODA) whenever appropriate to reduce its dependence on commercial borrowings, which cost higher than ODAs. *With a report from Reuters*

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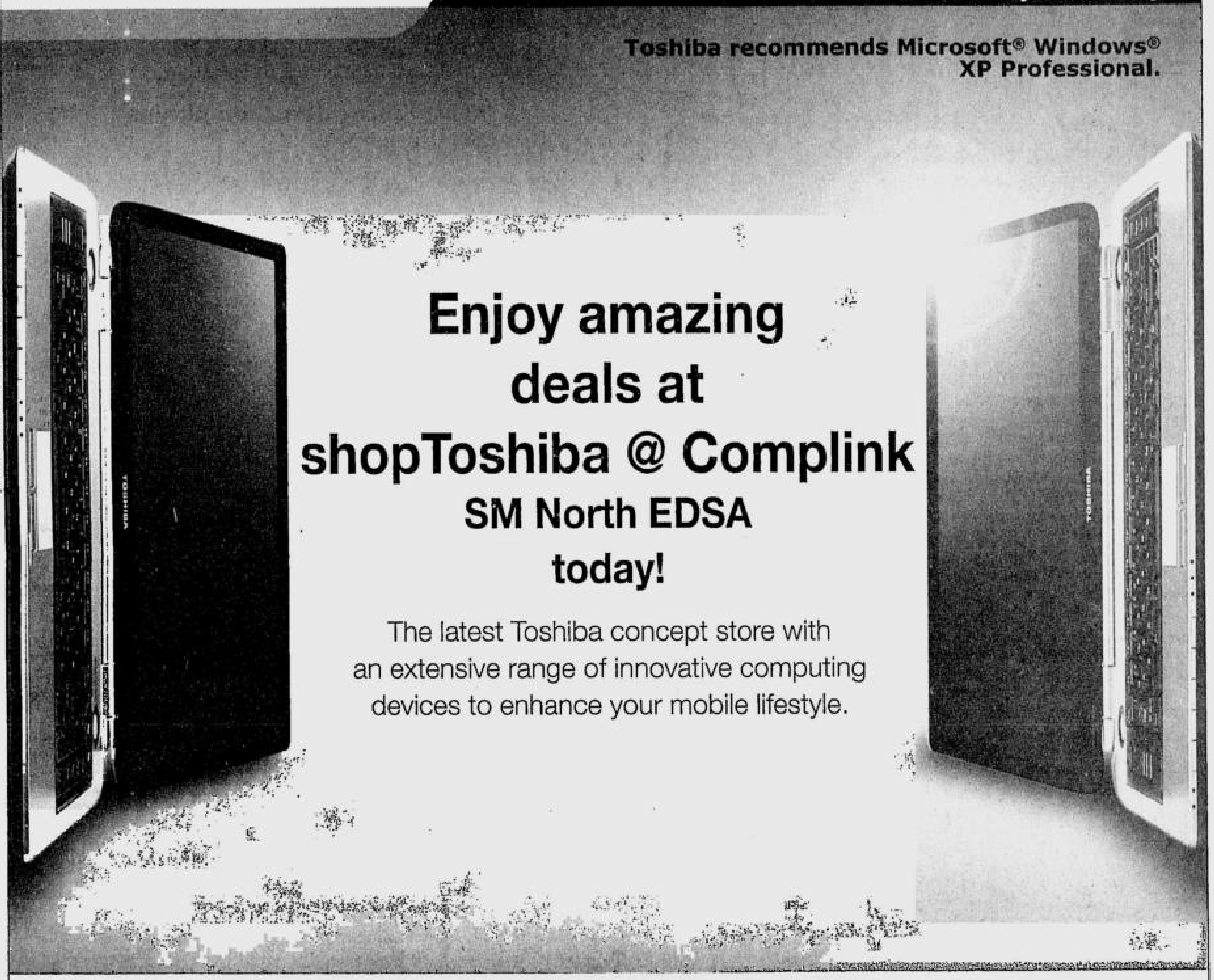

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Gov't sets mission to convince CalPERS to keep investments here

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE government is again on a mission to convince California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), the biggest pension fund in the United States, to retain its multimillion-dollar investments here as fresh threats of a pullout rise anew.

Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said Philippine representatives, headed by Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario, were in talks with CalPERS officials to assure them that the investment climate here was still in good shape despite negative perception about the country's ailing fiscal sector.

"We (economic officials) are communicating with Ambassador Del Rosario, and we want to make sure we still make it on CalPERS' list of investment sites," Purisima told reporters in an interview after his meeting with outgoing Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong.

Purisima will be leaving the Department of Trade and Industry next month to assume the top post at the Department of Finance.

CalPERS has an estimated $67 million worth of portfolio investment in the Philippines. It is the third-biggest pension fund in the world with $167 billion worth of assets, $2.6 billion of which is invested in emerging markets.

Talks of a possible delisting of the Philippines from CalPERS' list of permissible investment sites arose after the country suffered from a credit rating downgrade. International ratings firm Standard & Poor's this month downgraded by a notch the Philippines' foreign currency debt rating to BB- from BB, citing the country's lingering fiscal problem.

Fitch Ratings, for its part, downgraded its outlook on the Philippines from stable to negative last month, citing reasons related to the country's fiscal standing. Moody's Investors Service has yet to give its verdict on the Philippines next month, although there are fears it might follow the lead of S&P.

While the Arroyo administration has laid down several revenue-raising measures to address the government's fiscal woes, some creditors are waiting until after the measures are successfully implemented. The measures include increases in taxes, such as the recently approved higher imposts on "sin" products and the reduction of available fiscal incentives.

The national government's budget deficit stood at P186.1 billion in 2004. The Arroyo administration is targeting to wipe out the deficit by the end of her term in 2010 by generating P80 billion in additional revenue a year over the medium term.

Fears of a pullout by CalPERS came after the Philippines just recently successfully convinced the pension fund to keep its investments here. Early last year, a delegation was sent to the United States to present economic data and convince CalPERS to revise the Philippines' score of 1.87, which was below the score of 2, the threshold for permissible investment sites.

After the representatives presented economic developments, including updates on the country's capital and equities market, the CalPERS' board decided to raise the Philippines' score to 2.12, and thus keep its investments here.

RCBC to pursue $200-M debt issue

By Doris C. Dumlao

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. will proceed with the offshore issuance of up to $200 million in new debt paper this quarter despite the recent downgrade by Standard & Poor's of the sovereign long-term foreign debt rating.

In an interview, RCBC chair Cesar Virata said the bank's adviser, Union Bank of Switzerland, would determine the timing for the issuance of senior notes, but that it would likely happen within the first quarter.

"We don't know yet the amount. Our approval from BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) is up to $200 million but our minimum is $100 million," Virata said.

S&P lowered the Philippines' long-term sovereign foreign currency credit rating by one notch to BB- from BB. This brought the country's debt rating three notches below the much-coveted investment grade rating.

Virata said it was the government's own foreign borrowing that would influence the timing of RCBC's issuance as this would affect the supply of Philippine debt paper in the offshore market.

"Because the government is also entering, we just have to set the timing and the spreads," Virata said.

"It will be (sourced) overseas, denominated in dollars and it will be listed in Singapore," he added.

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BANK OUTLOOK

Economy seen growing by 5.5%

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank expects the economy to grow by 5.5 percent this year and the inflation rate to rise to 7.5 percent in view of high oil prices and global uncertainties.

In a presentation on the bank's economic outlook for 2005, BDO chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said the country's economic growth would slightly decline from the 2004 level taking into account a possible global economic slowdown.

In 2004, the government expects the economy to post a 6-percent growth, up from the 4.7 percent expansion in the previous year.

Ravelas said the robust services sector along with higher consumer spending would boost domestic economic growth this year.

He said remittances from overseas Filipino workers—which beefed up consumer spending and drive up the construction and property sectors—would likely rise further by 4-5 percent to $8.25 billion. The trade and telecom sectors will also continue to expand, he added.

However, Ravelas warned that the continued increases in oil prices and the volatility of the exchange rate might put pressure on the economy.

He expected the peso to trade at a range of 54.75-56.45 against the US dollar this year and end the year at 55.50:$1.

In the meantime, export earnings and the import bill were seen to grow by 12.98 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Ravelas said oil prices might stay within the $45-$50 per barrel range, which could in turn reduce economic growth by one percentage point.

Ravelas said inflation was expected to rise moderately in 2005 due to the following:

- strong demand and economic growth;
- higher crude oil prices, power and water prices as well as transportation costs, and,
- uncertainty over the sustainability of improvements in the fiscal sector.

Thus, Ravelas said a higher inflation might result in increases in interest rates in the near term and the medium-term.

The government is targeting an inflation rate range of 5-6 percent this year using the 2000-based consumer price index.

"Fiscal policy remains to be the key challenge. If not handled properly, this could increase the cost of the national government's borrowings and may lead to a crisis," Ravelas said.

Also, Ravelas said the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index would likely benefit from the influx of foreign funds and trading could reach as high as 2,200.

For the first time in five years, the 2,000 psychological barrier was breached on Monday.

RP hosting int'l mining conference

THE CHAMBER of Mines of the Philippines is holding a three-day international mining investment conference in Makati City on Feb. 2-4, 2005.

The conference marks the first pro-active salvo from the mining industry to show the world that the Philippines is now ready and open for mining investments. The recent Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and the Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) has paved the way for foreign companies to return to the Philippines and invest in large-scale mining projects here.

The conference program includes briefings on the economy, investment incentives, mining potential and dealings with local government, as well as policy speeches from key government officials in plenary sessions. CEOs of leading foreign corporations will share their experiences and expectations on investing in the Philippines.

A mining exhibition showcasing the 23 projects that are ready for foreign investments and business matching sessions are expected to generate substantial investor interest and offers for prospective joint ventures. On the last day of the conference, President Macapagal-Arroyo will give her keynote address which is expected to tackle the development and promotion of Philippine mining as an integral part of her 10-point development agenda.

A select group of CEOs from global mining players in Australia, Canada, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States were invited and over 100 foreign delegates are expected to attend.

Among those who confirmed their participation were Uichiro Niwa, chair of Itochu Corp.; Robert M. Friedland, founder and chair of Ivanhoe Mines Ltd. of Canada, and Changheng Yang, chair of China Metallurgical Construction Corp.

A VENDOR (left) pays his debt to a street corner moneylender, an informal source of funds for those who need extra money. The government announced that the poverty level in the country had fallen from about 27 percent of the population in 2000 to 24.7 percent in 2003 as incomes rose in all sectors. AFP

JDI sells stakes in property firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING firm Jardine Davies Inc. (JDI) said it was selling its stakes in two property companies to a Hong Kong real estate developers.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Jardine Davies, which is 95 percent held by the Jardine Matheson Group of Netherlands, said its board approved the sale of its entire 20-percent stake, equivalent to 2.32 million shares, in joint venture firm Jardine Land Inc. (JLI). These shares will be sold to Hongkong Land (PPI) BV., also an existing shareholder in JLI.

JLI has middle income housing projects in Taguig, called Lexington, and another in Cavite, called Greenwoods.

The other partners in JLI are the Metrobank Group, San Miguel Properties and Equitable PCI Bank Group with 20-percent stake each.

Jardine Davies will likewise sell its 20-percent interest, or 520,000 shares, in Jardine Properties Inc. (JPI), the marketing arm of JLI. Hongkong Land is also buying the said shares.

Jardine Davies is expected to fetch roughly $2.5 million or its peso equivalent from the sale of its shares in the two companies.

The planned sale is still subject to the approval of these companies' stockholders.

Upon completion of the sale, Hongkong Land will hold 40 percent stake in each of the two firms.

Both Jardine and Hongkong Land are part of the Jardine Matheson Group.

Sources said Jardine Davies would use a portion of the proceeds of the sale to settle liabilities to shareholders amounting to P100 million.

Jardine Davies is one of the oldest and most diversified companies operating in the country. It is planning to divest its interests in property development. The company is also involved in marketing and distribution of agricultural chemicals in the country.

Jardine Davies is part of Jardine Engineering Corp. It has two major division—the Jardine Building Solutions (JBS) and the Jardine Agchem (JA).

Sun subscriber base hit 1.1M in 2004

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN Cellular of Gokongwei-owned Digitel Mobile Philippines Inc. ended 2004 with more than 1.1 million subscribers, or short of its 1.2 million target for the year.

Digitel Mobile said it would expand its network further this year to gain more subscribers.

Sun Cellular entered the market in March 2003 and is gradually expanding its coverage.

It hit the 1-million subscriber mark shortly after introducing its 24/7 plan in October. The plan offers unlimited text and calls within the network for P250 a month or P100 for 10 days.

Digitel president Lance Gokongwei earlier said the company would grow its customer base to at least two million by the end of this year.

The company is programmed to invest $100 million this year to expand Sun Cellular's network. By the end of 2005, Digitel's wireless brand would have close to 2,000 cellular sites, from about 1,000 last year.

Gokongwei wants Sun Cellular to become the "Walmart" of the local telecom industry, offering the best possible deals to subscribers.

The 22-month-old Sun Cellular is cashing in on its late-mover advantage which, Gokongwei said, had allowed it to put up its required infrastructure at a much lower cost.

He said the funding for the roll-out would largely come from European credit facilities. Digitel had tapped European contractors Alcatel and Ericsson to install most of its facilities.

The Gokongweis have already infused about $350 million into Sun Cellular. Analysts said the Gokongwei group needed to invest $500 million more to compete more aggressively with the top two players in the market.

"Our thrust is to create value for our customers. We came in quite late and we are taking advantage of our lower costs. We are passing on the savings to our customers," explained Gokongwei.

Its subscriber base may pale in comparison with Smart Communication Inc.'s more than 19 million and Globe Telecom Inc.'s close to 13 million in 2004, but the Digitel official said Sun Cellular had been growing faster than the industry's major players.

The strategy now, he said, was to urge customers to use Sun Cellular as a second phone while tapping new subscribers from the young and low-end market.

With its 24/7 plan, Gokongwei said the company would also encourage the use of Sun Cellular as a fixed-line alternative.

He said 24/7 is a plan and not a promo so it would be available for a longer period. "The intention is to maintain it because it is a plan. Some more innovations will come out in the future," assured Gokongwei.

Gokongwei said the cost of the network roll-out had dropped by about 7 to 8 percent from previous levels.

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From page B1

made by other regional bourses in line with Wall Street's overnight advance.

Fastfood giant Jollibee Foods Corp. was the most actively traded stock, but remained unchanged at P27.50.

Ayala Land Inc. fell 40 centavos to P8.40, while Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) shed P25 to P1,430.

Globe Telecom ended flat at P950, while Bank of the Philippine Islands was unchanged at P56.50.

Shopping mall developer SM Prime Holdings was up 10 centavos at P8.30, while Ayala Corp. fell 10 centavos at P7.60.

San Miguel Corp. saw its "A" and "B" shares both stay unchanged at P58 and P77.50, respectively. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 26, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.7	113,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	28	28.5	28	28.5	900,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	56.5	56	56.5	1,689,400
China Banking Corp.	565	570	565	570	7,980
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	46.5	46.5	123,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	2,600,000
International Exch. Bank	18	18.25	18	18.25	178,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30	31	29.5	30	669,100
Philippine National Bank	28.5	29	28.5	28.5	253,200
Phil. Savings Bank	29	30	29	30	1,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	14	14	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	31.5	31.5	31	31	37,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	28	28.5	28	28.5	127,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1	1.06	1	1.04	460,000
First Abacus Financial	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	350,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	174	194	174	194	510
Manulife Financial Corp.	2400	2400	2400	2400	210
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.14	2.2	2.14	2.18	792,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	131	131	124	124	17,010
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1780	1780	1780	1780	740
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.5	18	18.5	30,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.82	1.84	1.8	1.8	11,276,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	950	950	945	950	87,120
Ipeople Inc.	4	4.05	4	4.05	153,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	5,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	390,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	59,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.75	7,204,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1455	1455	1425	1430	185,310
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	53,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	272,600
Manila Electric Co. B	26	26	25	25	1,045,500
Petron Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.75	3.8	4,196,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.36	1.2	1.34	4,229,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	70,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	50,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	688,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	70,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	90,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.44	0.46	0.43	0.43	3,100,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1	1	1	1	80,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.55	3.6	3,534,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.16	1.16	200,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.05	3.05	3	3	89,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	30	29.5	30	13,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	12,928,900
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.74	320,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	120,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58	57.5	58	29,600
San Miguel Corp. B	77.5	77.5	77.5	77.5	108,000
Universal Robina Corp.	9.8	9.9	9.8	9.9	73,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	5,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	24,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	3,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.6	6,537,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.47	0.49	0.46	0.49	1,040,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	450,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	5,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	1,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	101,000
APC Group Inc.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.185	6,610,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.0095	0.009	0.009	489,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	110,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	95,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	22.25	22.25	21.25	21.25	25,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.93	0.94	12,370,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.22	0.26	0.22	0.25	24,070,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.35	0.29	0.29	60,040,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.5	4.4	4.5	6,452,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.032	0.034	0.032	0.034	9,700,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	1,310,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	8.6	9.1	8.6	8.9	2,782,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	35.5	35.5	34.5	35.5	813,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.07	17,100,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.2	1.42	1.12	1.3	11,273,000
Ionics Inc.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	84,000
Jardine Davies Inc.	21	21	21	21	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.35	3.35	3.2	3.2	56,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.46	2.46	2,781,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	700,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	2,000,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	200,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	16,710,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.32	1.2	1.32	80,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.165	0.17	0.16	0.16	350,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.49	350,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	130,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.33	0.45	0.33	0.4	1,370,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	4,000,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.175	0.185	0.175	0.185	2,510,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.235	0.24	1,880,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.75	1.02	0.75	1.02	230,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.68	8,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.9	0.9	40,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.63	0.64	0.62	0.62	8,350,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.12	1.02	1.1	4,408,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	160,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,150,000
Philippine Racing Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.25	18.25	18	18	627,800
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.7	8.8	8.4	8.4	10,581,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	40,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.77	0.7	0.77	1,170,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	5,400,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	50,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	760,000
Empire East Land Inc	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	9,440,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.32	1.34	3,417,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	0.0825	100,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	1,060,000
City & Land Developers	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	36,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	2,020,000
Primex Corp.	3	3	3	3	70,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.2	0.205	0.2	0.205	5,700,000
SM Development Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.44	312,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.3	8.2	8.3	7,673,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co., Inc.B	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	150,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	620,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8	8.6	7.8	7.9	8,942,000
Benguet Corp. A	4.4	5.2	4.4	4.8	321,000
Benguet Corp. B	6	6	6	6	5,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.5	0.5	0.47	0.47	23,770,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng Co B	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.56	40,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.024	0.024	1,785,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.039	0.04	0.036	0.037	1,426,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	165,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.4	1.44	1.36	1.36	14,911,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.6	1.68	1.58	1.64	17,336,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.42	0.46	0.39	0.42	5,760,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	72,500,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.006	70,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	27,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	398,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	33,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.31	0.4	0.31	0.4	1,220,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.39	1,040,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	10,400,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.48	2.6	2.48	2.6	68,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.08	0.0825	0.075	0.075	9,600,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.37	0.4	0.35	0.38	2,080,000

CURRENCIES

January 26, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.770891	1.000000	55.3410
Japan	Yen	0.007410	0.009612	0.5319
United Kingdom	Pound	1.437095	1.864200	103.1667
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098846	0.128223	7.0960
Switzerland	Franc	0.646070	0.838082	46.3803
Canada	Dollar	0.623951	0.809389	44.7924
Singapore	Dollar	0.470084	0.609793	33.7466
Australia	Dollar	0.589411	0.764584	42.3128
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.044913	2.652661	146.8009
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205571	0.266667	14.7576
Brunei	Dollar	0.468656	0.607940	33.6440
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000109	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.019971	0.025907	1.4337
UAE	Dirham	0.209921	0.272309	15.0699
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.297200	71.7883
Argentina	Peso	0.264230	0.342759	18.9686
Brazil	Real	0.287646	0.373134	20.6496
Denmark	Kroner	0.134376	0.174313	9.6467
India	Rupee	0.017661	0.022910	1.2679
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.202893	0.263193	14.5654
Mexico	New Peso	0.068281	0.088574	4.9018
New Zealand	Dollar	0.546499	0.708918	39.2322
Norway	Kroner	0.121740	0.157921	8.7395
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013011	0.016878	0.9340
South Africa	Rand	0.129561	0.168067	9.3010
Korea	Won	0.000748	0.000970	0.0537
Sweden	Kroner	0.110135	0.142867	7.9064
Syria	Pound	0.014842	0.019253	1.0655
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024211	0.031407	1.7381
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000402	0.000522	0.0289

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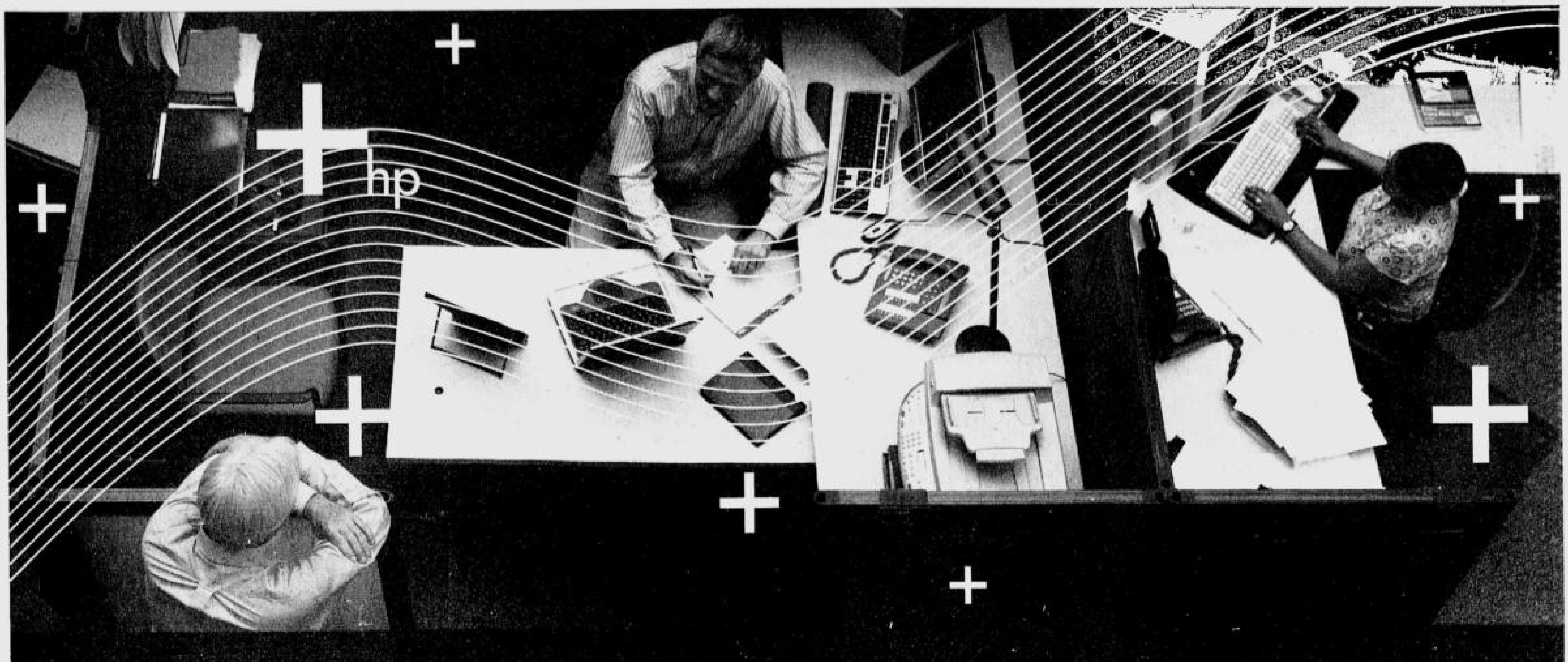

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- One-year, Worldwide Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

^(2MB Cache, 1.10GHz, 400MHz FSB)

FREE External USB v2 MultiBay Cradle
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PHP118,950

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- 60GB HDD
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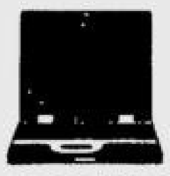
- 10/100/1000 LAN (Broadband ready)
- High Speed 56K modem
- 512MB memory
- Intelligent Manageability
- HP Premier Sound™ audio
- Three-year, Worldwide Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

^(2MB Cache, 1.70GHz, 400MHz FSB)

FREE Targus Carrying Case



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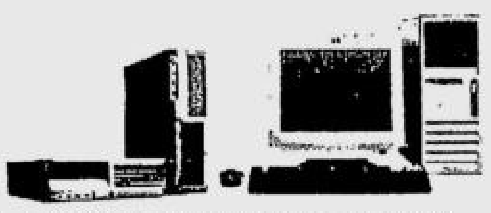
- Three-year, Worldwide Limited Warranty (parts and labor)

^(2MB Cache, 1.60GHz, 400MHz FSB)

FREE External USB v2 MultiBay Cradle
FREE DVD CD Writer Combo MultiBay drive (Hot Swappable)
FREE Targus Carrying Case



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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
- Intel® 915G Chipset
- 256MB PC3200 DDR
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- Integrated Broadcom NeXtreme Gigabit Ethernet
- 3-year parts, 3-year labor, and 3-year on-site service (next business day)
- HP S5500 15"CRT Monitor

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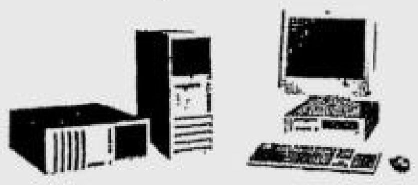

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- 48X CD-ROM drive
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 256MB DDR (PC 2700) memory
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- Integrated Broadcom NeXtreme Gigabit Ethernet
- Intelligent Manageability
- HP S5500 15" CRT monitor
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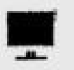
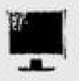
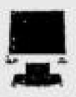


HP Flat Panel Monitor L1530
- (15") 38.1cm Digital TFT
- Maximum resolution of 1024 x 768
- 3-year on-site warranty
- PHP20,199



HP Flat Panel Monitor L1702
- (17") 43.18cm Analog TFT
- Maximum resolution of 1280 x 1024
- 3-year on-site warranty
- PHP23,199



HP Flat Panel Monitor L1730
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- Maximum resolution of 1280 x 1024
- 3-year on-site warranty
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People, Events & Products

TBWA\Asia Pacific named Agency of the Year by Media Magazine

TBWA\Asia Pacific has been named "Agency of the Year" by Media Magazine, Asia Pacific's leading media, advertising and marketing publication. TBWA\Tequila Singapore has also been awarded "Office of the Year" and John Merrifield from TBWA\Japan, "Creative of the Year". This is the first time any agency has collected a total of 3 awards at the event, which includes both "Agency of the Year" and "Office of the Year". Tequila\Singapore was also named runner-up in the "Below-The-Line Agency of the Year" category.

In its commentary on the win, Media Magazine said the award "demonstrated that TBWA\ was capable of punching above its age and weight... not only in account reviews, but at international award shows as well." It noted that under the guidance of Asia Pacific chair, Keith Smith, the network has developed "a team that is entrepreneurial, quality focused and has demonstrated honed TBWA\'s Disruption positioning into a fearsome competitive edge."

The magazine commended the agency's strong new business performance, highlighting wins such as Standard Chartered and Singapore Airlines KrisFlyer. It also remarked on the networks amazing run at international awards shows including Cannes, Clio, D&AD and One Show. Media finished up by praising the agency's "Disruption" positioning and training program, which has taught its staff to think differently and deliver exceptional creative ideas.

Commenting on TBWA\Tequila Singapore's win, Media praised the agency on its decision to integrate TBWA and Tequila offices under joint CEO's, describing the move as a "master stroke". Media also congratulated the office on its impressive win record, both in terms of new business and creative awards, and on its commitment to the industry and to developing advertising talent.

Finally, Media congratulated John Merrifield from TBWA\Japan on his win, commenting on his "ability to deliver exceptional creative solutions" and "some of the region's most awe-inspiring work". The magazine pointed out towards Merrifield's work on adidas in particular, highlighting his "Vertical Football" billboard has become the third most awarded piece of communication globally in 2004. "Merrifield has successfully inculcated a culture of creative innovation, turning (TBWA\Japan) into one of the country's most awarded in the space of just 12 months" said Media.

For more information, contact Emma Vincent, regional marketing manager on +852-2833-9866 or email emma.vincent@tbwa.com.hk.

BPI DONATES P2.5M TO PONDO NG PINOY

The Bank of the Philippine Islands donated P2.5M to the 'Pondo ng Pinoy' Community Foundation Inc, a development program led by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, which is raising P10 million from 25-centavo donations collected in parishes for livelihood projects of organizations working for the poor. Archbishop Rosales (2nd from left) received the donation, made in behalf of the BPI and its president, Xavier Loinaz, from BPI officials led by senior executive president and incoming president Aurelio Montinola III (3rd from left) in simple ceremonies at the Archbishop's Place in Mandaluyong City. Witnessing the handover of donation were (from left): BPI senior vice presidents Dada Trillo and Myra Sylianteng, and Pondo ng Pinoy executive director Fr. Anton Pascual.

MAYOR GONZALES LEADS ST. FRANCIS GROUND-BREAKING

Mayor Neptali M. Gonzales II and Tomas C. Zita II, vice chair of the Kuok Group, led the guests of honor at the recent ground-breaking ceremonies of The St. Francis Luxury Residences. The St. Francis is the Kuok Group's second residential condominium project in the country. Their 46-storey The Shang Grand Tower in Legazpi Village in Makati will have its topping off ceremonies on Feb. 6. Photo shows Mayor Neptali M. Gonzales II (3rd from left) and Tom C. Zita Jr., vice chair of the Kuok Group, with (from left) Eden Lin, vice president, Projects EPHI of the Kuok Group; Susan Yu, director of sales, The Shang Grand Tower; Menchie Abalos; Carmelo Casas, principal architect, Recto+Casas; Simon Tam of Kerry Properties, and Anthony Lee, chief architect, Wong & Tung Int'l Ltd.

The CubeBlog EB party

IN THE past months, Cubeblog events have been all over the metropolis, inviting bloggers to have fun, meet new people, join games, win prizes and encourage the rest of their friends to join the ever-growing CubeBlog barkada. The main idea? To foster the coolest hangout experience not only virtually but also for real.

The latest in the string of "Blog parties" was the CubeBlog EB (Eye Ball) Party, which recently took place at The Basement of Eastwood City, Libis. The party gave bloggers a chance to meet face to face. Not only did registered members of CubeBlog attended the party; but non-members were also invited - to participate in the games and fun raffles. Guests were treated with free drinks while grooving with the rest of the crowd to the tunes of guest performer Shane Trace and featured bands Wunjo and Stone Free.

Partygoers also took the dance floor -to the beat spun by DJ Arnel and DJ Edralin. The antics of hosts, RX 93.1 DJ Tom Alvarez, BlogMan Reuben and BlogGirl Pattie,-lucky party guests made it home with a Sony Ericsson K500i mobile phone and gift certificates, thanks to the cool CubeBlog raffles.

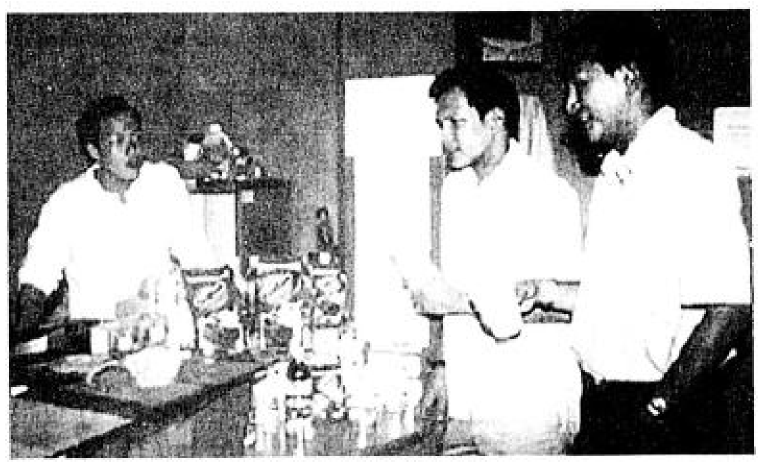
The success of the first ever CubeBlog EB Party isn't surprising. It is a unique site that gives CubeBloggers access to their accounts via the Internet, mobile phone or landline. Its Moblogging feature allows users to post entries and upload photos from their mobile phones straight to their CubeBlog accounts. Another feature called CubeTLK enables CubeBloggers to record voice messages and post comments on other CubeBlog members' sites using their PLDT landlines. Their BlogPals will be able to retrieve these voice recordings online. Additional features like these attract scores of new CubeBlog users daily.

Longing to be a part of Cubeblog and have this one-of-a-kind experience? Log on and register to www.cubeblog.com or text Mblog on to your mobile phone and send to 483 for Smart and Talk & Text or 2219 to Globe and Touch Mobile. You and your barkada can watch out for the next CubeBlog event, join games and win cool raffle prizes.

BUGLAS BUSINESS FORUM

The Buglas Foundation, with the mission to promote entrepreneurship in Negros Oriental, conducted a business forum held at the Bethel Hotel in Dumaguete City. Shown posing for posterity are the Buglas officers together with the guest speaker from the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI). Shown are (seated from left): Dr. Rene Gayo, assistant secretary and Meralco Foundation Inc (MFI) trustee; Gen. Bocanegra, president; Julio Sy Sr., chair; Col. Alex Escaño, VP and MFI president; and Dr. Bernie Villegas, trustee; (standing from left): Dr. Raul Hernandez, VP, PCCI; Greg Uymatiao, trustee; Mr. Sung and Mr. Ibañez, members; ambassador Jose Romero Jr., trustee and Ernie Quiamco, member and PCCI Negros Oriental chapter.

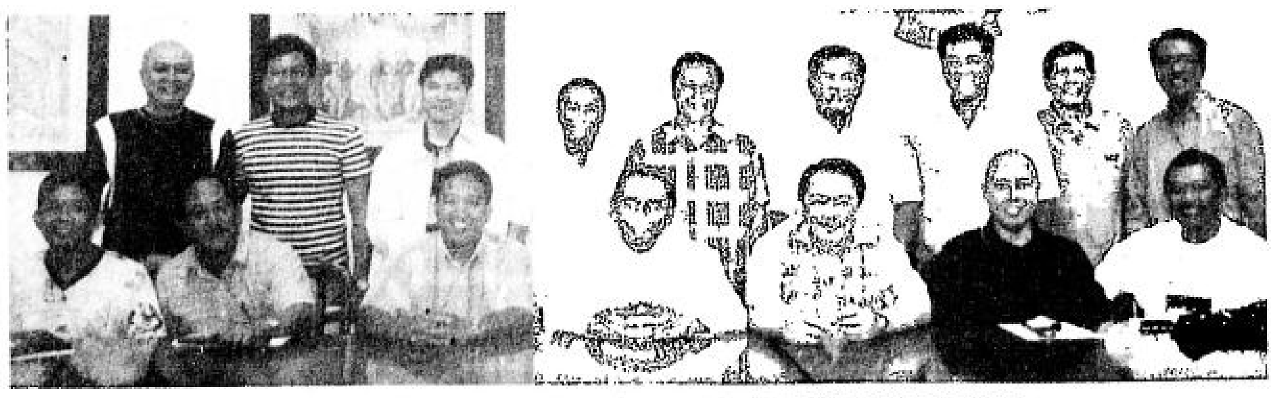
OVALTINE A FAVORITE IN CHAMBA JUICE



Ovaltine guys Marco Torres (Ovaltine Power brand manager) and Arbie Zalamea (assistant brand manager) happily partake of an Ovaltine treat which they chanced upon when they stopped to buy drinks at Chamba Juice, a newly opened juice in the Fort. Patrick Tantoco who owns Chamba jJuice says 'Ovaltine has the best taste among all the chocolate drinks and that it is also a healthy beverage.' Tantoco who believes that healthy food shouldn't be expensive uses Ovaltine as the basic ingredient in all his chocolate drink concoctions. Shown in photo are (from left) Patrick Tantoco, Arbie Zalamea and Marco Torres.

Gano Excel receives award

GANO Excel (Phils) Inc was chosen as the No. 1 Direct Selling Company (Food Supplements) by the National Shoppers' Choice for the year 2004. The National Shoppers' Choice Award is bestowed to honor and recognize companies that have excelled in their respective fields of business based on the criteria of product quality, company reputation, brand recognition and consumer services. This is the company's second recognition for 2004. Last Aug. 26, Bernardo Chua, its general manager also received the Dangal ng Bayan Award for Business and Industry from the 2004 Joint 22nd Annual People's Choice and National Consumers Quality Awards which was held at the AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. A year ago, the firm also received the Outstanding Multi-Level Marketing Company award from the Asia-Pacific Excellence Awards. These citations are solid proofs of the company's strength and stability in the networking industry. Going on its sixth year now, Gano Excel (Phils) Inc continuously provides superior quality products and excellent income opportunity to many people around the world fulfilling its mission of bringing health and wealth to every family. The awarding ceremonies for the 2nd National Shoppers' Choice Annual Awards was held at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City last Nov. 14, 2004.



SAN BEDA CAS CLASS '80 PREPARES FOR SILVER JUBILEE HOMECOMING

Members of the San Beda College of Arts and Sciences Class of 1980 gathered recently at the Mendiola campus to discuss preparations for their Silver Jubilee Homecoming on Feb. 19. Shown are (seated, from left): Ernie Cabreros, Gil Cortez, Ogie Tamayo, Fr. Pio Lomibao, Cardie Roque, Chito Loyzaga and Jojo Palad; (standing, from left): Edwin Chu, Perci Crisostomo, Rennie Tan, Caloy Valera, Al Chichoco, Mon Posadas, Ed Rodriguez, Pidoy Velez and Joffre Alajar.

POTRERO MALABON FIRE AND RESCUE VOLUNTEERS GIFT GIVING PROJECT

In the spirit of thanksgiving Potrero Malabon Filipino-Chinese Fire and Rescue Volunteers offered their gift giving project to at least 500 families of Potrero Malabon. The group was established since year 2000, and is still active in fighting fire and rescuing life. The project is headed by their president and fire chief; Andrew Go, vice president; Alvin Dy, membership committee; Jacinto Lee Gan Jr., sergeant-at-arms; Nixon Sy, and directors Jayson So, Nelson So, Charlie Policarpio, Oliver Co, Sherwin Lim, Michael Lim and Albert Ng.

St. Theresa's College QC 2005 homecoming

ST. THERESA'S College QC will hold its annual homecoming on Jan. 29. This year's event will have the theme "Ginto Pilak at Sari-saring Halakhak" and will be hosted by high school batch 1980, its Silver Jubilarians. Also joining them will be the Golden Jubilarians from High School Batch 1955. The event is sponsored by Microsoft Phils, Globe Telecoms, Nestle Phils, Leslie Corp and Red Ribbon Retiro Branch. The homecoming program is as follows: 1:30 p.m. - registration; 1:30 to 3 p.m. - entertainment by a chamber orchestra and chat time; 3 to 4 p.m. - mass; 4 to 4:30 p.m. - parade of batches and batch picture taking; 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. - speeches and presentations of Teresa's Light awardees; 5:30 to 8 p.m. onwards - batch presentations and tribute to teachers. Exciting raffle prizes are at stake for lucky alumnae and for early bird registrants. All alumnae are encouraged to pre-register for the event by paying P200 or a one time fee of P2,000 to become a lifetime member. For details, contact the St. Theresa's College, QC Alumnae Association office c/o Rose Diaz Sales at 740-0115. For batch 80 classmates, contact Des Angeles-Costales at 416-9433 or email Ameng Borja-Ilagan at ameng_ilagan@yahoo.com.

'Come Alive in Five!'

ATTENTION all DLSU graduates here and abroad. Silver Jubilarians batch 1980 presents "Come Alive in Five!", a grand homecoming at 5 p.m., March 5, at the DLSU football field. Food, drinks till curfew hours; all-night entertainment by your favorite La Sallians, and blasts from the past (Trattoria, dedication booth, Andros Sports Bar). Other events include: Commerce Fellowship on Jan. 27 (venue to be announced); 2nd Br. Benedict Golf Cup on Feb. 28 at Alabang Country Club. For further details and ticket reservations, call: DLSU batch 80 secretariat - +63 927-9161011; DLSAA office - +63 2-523-6158; email: dlsu80sec@yahoo.com. Please leave your contact numbers and email addresses.

Bits Clips

Gary Cokins holds forum

WORLD-renowned performance management expert Gary Cokins is in town as guest speaker in an upcoming executive breakfast forum entitled "Performance Management: Making It Work! Measuring and Managing Customer Value." Organized by SAS, leading provider of business intelligence and analytics software, this exclusive, by-invitation-only forum will be held on Jan. 27 from 7:30 to 11 a.m. at the Grand Ballroom of the New World Hotel, Makati City. For inquiries call (02) 633-6916 local 106.

EAMC Prostate Club meet

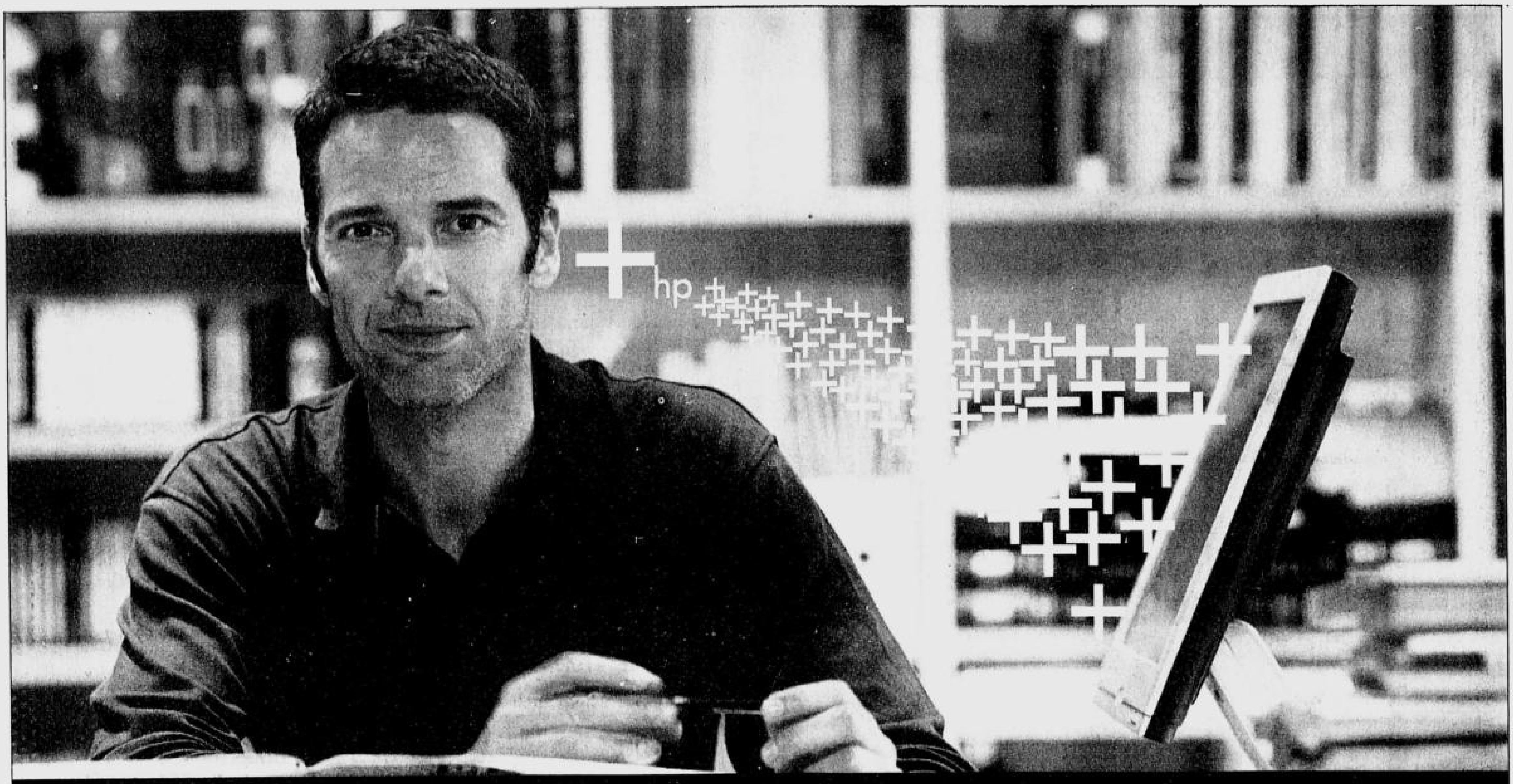
THE EAST Avenue Medical Center Prostate Club will have its 4th meeting on Jan. 29, 8 a.m. at 7th Floor, East Avenue Medical Center. Membership is open for male, 40 years old above for free, and will also conduct free seminar for all. For inquiries, please call Dr. Yrastorza at 928-2410.

Nat'l Fitness Competition

IN ITS goal to promote health consciousness and physical fitness especially during these times, Danding's Body Shape Fitness Center, the most popular fitness center in the revitalized Cubao, will hold a National Competition on Aerobics, Boxing and Gym. This is in celebration of its 1st anniversary on Jan. 29. Health buffs and sports enthusiasts are welcome to join in this prestigious event to be held at the Atrium of Farmers Plaza Entertainment at 2 to 5 p.m.

PLDT retirees' reunion

THE 2005 fellowship meeting cum reunion of retired PLDT officers and employees will be held on Feb. 7, at 12 p.m. at the Hard Rock Cafe in Makati City, near Landmark department store, instead of the place earlier agreed on. Buffet lunch will be served for a reasonable pre-arranged price. For more details about the event, interested parties may got in touch with Teri at 0917-838-2344.



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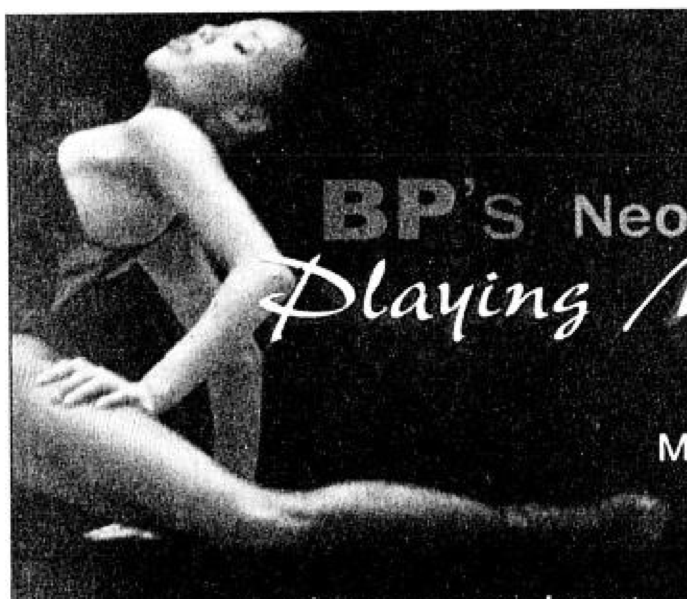

BP's Neo-Filipino
Playing Maestro Ryan

March 11-12, 2005
CCP Main Theatre

Nothing comes close to evoking the Filipino soul than through the music of the Maestro himself, Mr. Ryan Cayabyab. Mr. C, as he is affectionately called has been celebrated, awarded, revered and loved. His genius has encompassed a staggering vision of works that includes opulent musicals such as Rama Hari and full-length ballets such as La Revolucion Filipina. Ryan Cayabyab's music is blessed with a golden touch and has long proven to withstand the test of time.

On the 11th and 12th of March 2005 a new spectacle shall awaken. It will feature the world premiere of Ballet Philippines' [illegible]

[illegible] Irish Abejero, Christine [illegible] Damian. They will explore their cho[illegible] fuller theatrical experience and draw their inspiration from one of the dance world's true geniuses, Mr Maurice Bejart. Experimental. Uninhibited. Bold.

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CIT-DAT BATCH '82 REUNION

For the first time in 22 years, the Capiz Institute of Technology - Department of Arts and Trade (CIT-DAT) High School Class of 1982 held its reunion dubbed as *Kita-Kitz '04* at the Baybayon Beach Resort on December 30, 2004. The Reunion was attended by the Batch '82 graduates, their families and their mentors. Highlighting the program was the elections of officers in preparation for the Silver Anniversary Celebration, which followed shortly after the mass.

PMAP elects new president

THE PERSONNEL Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), the premier organization of Human Resource Management (HRM) professionals in the country, has elected its new president Lina A. Aseneta, FPM principal for finance, HR and administration of Fernandez, Santos and Lopez, CPAs. Aseneta, has been active in PMAP committees and activities since 1993 and served in the board from 1999 to 2002, having held the positions of treasurer and vice president in 2001 and 2002 respectively. She was overall chair of PMAP's annual conference for 2002 and 2003. A graduate of BSC in Economics (cum laude) form the University of the East, she has worked as administrative manager and principal for finance and administration for other companies. An active rotarian, she is the immediate past president of Rotary Club of Roces, Rotary International District 3780, Quezon City. She has been awarded Most Outstanding Rotarian in 2002 and 2003. Induction ceremonies of the new officers and board members of PMAP are set for Jan. 26, at the Garden Halls of Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City during the association's first general monthly meeting of the year.

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Yaya, Cook H'maid 8957507

LIPAT BAHAY

L-BAHAY 9206784 4540520

L-BAHAY 8383742/09208449984

P1200/TRIP 742-14-57

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

COMMERCIAL

PASIG

ORTIGAS FRONTING TEKTITE NICE RESTO/BAR/CAFE LOCK STOCKS = BARREL P1.5M T-8894796/5039/6475

HOUSE & LOT

LAS PINAS

P1M 2BR 2STRY 8054686

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Bgy. Zabarte Novaliches, Quezon city
for as LOW as P2,672/mo.*
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*Based on P2631 HDMF Loan Value as of June 27, 2004
REACH OUT REALTY: 983-1804 • FORTE REALTY: 830-0372
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HOUSE & LOT

LAGUNA

HOUSE & LOT

LAGUNA

CORTE BELLA

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132 sqm. usable floor area · 5 BR · 2 T&B · Balcony · Carport

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Marcos Highway, Cainta, Rizal

For inquiries, pls. call: 721-0771 / 724-7543

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MAKATI

MKT NR AYALA BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/2 1/2tb/grge P3.720M up 8903461 loc 34

MARIKINA

Bnew 4BR 3TB 2.6M 9487112

PARANAQUE

LA1800m² 8223346/8219948

QUEZON CITY

H&L + contents RUSH SALE LA306 FA212sqm 4rm 2grge nr SM Fairview P5.5M cash 4305834 / 09183724967

•Sikatuna Vil. #81 Mahiyain 9210255 9219967 9209822

W.Plains 600m² 5BR 15M 4121825 / 09177914366

BULACAN

STA. MARIA 225T 9372688

STA. MARIA 225T 9372688

LAGUNA

BINAN P400T/mo 5201792

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.2M C5 Nr The Fort 12T/mo. or 4Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313226

MAKATI CONDO RENT/SALE 410-8395 / 0919-8504468

Nr Rockwell Penthse 2sty 9M 3BR 4121825;09177914366

RENT 2 OWN 10K 2br Nr Mkti 0922-8086855

Rockwell 183m² 2BR 14.5M 147m² 2BR 12.5M 412-1825

CONDO/TWNHSE

MANILA

CONDO APT w/grg 5636296

SN ANDRES MANILA Bnew Twnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.355M up 8903461 loc 34

MANDALUYONG

CONDO,BNEW, RFO 09192189817

QUEZON CITY

BRAND NEW PROJECT 4 2STOREY W/ ATTIC 637-4316

CUBAO P1.5M Flexible Terms Offsetting OK 09178348080

SCT TUAZON 2.3M 4163161

LOT

MAKATI

McKinley Hills Global City P10M 634-1212

PASIG

Ortigas Ext. 150m² 6286238

QUEZON CITY

Ayala Hillside 682m² 754m² @ 21,500 /m² 4121825; 09177914366

KATIPUNAN EXT COM'L beside future Kenny Rogers 1,100m² & 451m²@P9.5th/m² 454-5667 / 0918- 9235216

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LOT

PROVINCIAL

★100% TAGAYTAY ★ 240m²-up 3,558m² 134T D/P 6 Mos to pay 6T Mo. nr Taal Vista 6609372

OTHER AREAS

100% Tagaytay 240m² 6286238

OTHER PROVINCIAL

5ha Good for Subdivision Magarao C Sur P150/m² 0437785373 C-09184204333

ATIMONAN QUEZON Resort Lots 150m² @ 3000/m² 09184204333/T0437785373

BAGUIO BOKAWAN RD 428 SQM 14M 0465155420 09173730799 CECIL

CASA MILANS 518m² 6500/m² PALLOS VERDE 9202001

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

MAKATI

DASMA/SANLO/BEL-AIR/URDA 4-5BRS DEN POOL P80-160T/MO T-8894796/5039/6475

PARANAQUE

MARIMAR 3BR 2TB Grg nr SM Bic Wtr Ok 823-2885

CONDO/TWNHSE

PASIG

Res888 3br FF 50tneg 412-1825*

APARTMENT

MANILA

561-0960 0920-4136412 AJ 5,500 - 7,000 New Built House

QUEZON CITY

193 Ilocos St Bago Bantay QC Call Lovely 455-1692

ROOM & BOARD

•FURNISH PASAY 8872665•

Nr Chin. Gen Mla 7836781

P200! Sucat Pque 8275345

BUSINESS RENTAL

AYALA AVE 8181696/7586

CUBAO Shp 500m² 25T 7257342

PTAMO nr BUENDIA 1st class 62/129/148/185m² 8903461 loc. 34 or 19 ofc hrs

RESORT LEASE/ RENT

Pansol Hot Spring priv 7767507

LOAN & MORTGAGE

BUSINES DOCTOR 524-3197

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

Francisco Gold Bldg I 73.60m² 12T All-In 4121825; 09177914366

MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

Ortigas Ctr 70 145 300 1200m² 412-1825 / 0917-7914366

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE OR RENT

HOUSE & LOT

Capitolyo 6BR 16M 631-3496

FORBES/DASMA/URDA Furn / Unfurn 0918-9392979

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

FORD

'04RS LYNX All Power 580T 0927-9380331 RUSH SALE

OTHER CAR BRANDS

Pajero Town-Lite-Hi-Ace Delica Serena etc 7127539

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

CAR VANS 929-2811 410-0495

CarsVans CoasterBus 422-9296

CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8969956

MB 7415897•09208328657

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P800/L3 9136710 / 4333682

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1.5% Car Loan 5344441

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0361

1.5% Easy Car Loan 3748765

1.5% Easy Car Loan 4112547/48

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/out taking car 5315577

2% w/out taking car 6567685

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BILLIARDS

26T New Compt Sr Imptd 7767507

BUY/SELL

EDUC PALN 2528373/2557990

GARAGE SALE

Moving Out All Must Go! 18 Gilmore U10-C Gilmore Hghts., New Mla. 8:00-5:00 Jan. 26 to 27 • 0927-6037717

PETS

DOG TRAINER 0919-2050952

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GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that Plates No. DJG-639 registered in the name of MERLINDA GARCIA, was lost per Affidavit of Loss dated Jan. 7, 2005 under Notarial Registry of Atty. Benjamin B. Tabaque as Doc. 300; Page 61; Book 286; Series of 2005.
(PDI - Jan. 13, 20 & 27, 2005)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Work Thru Phone 09192235381

PUTO Redi Mix 564-2759

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Sec.Agency/DermaClnc 6313496

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

★MARKETING ASST.★
Coll Grad 20-22 yrs old 8175511
Txt or Call 0919-2401280 8944950

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) invites **Architectural, Engineering and Interior Design Consultants to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the Architectural, Engineering and Interior Design Consultancy Services for the proposed BSPI Offices and Training Center and Rehabilitation of Roof Deck of Multi-Storey Building.** The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the said consultancy services requirement is **P12,000,000.00.**

The Scope of work includes among others the technical evaluation and the preparation of all pertinent plans, specifications and detailed estimates to include architectural, structural, furniture design and layout, necessary electrical, electronics and communication, mechanical and plumbing/sanitary engineering works for the rehabilitation and renovation of the existing structure and facilities at the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th floors and roof deck of the Multi-Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex.

The minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1.0 The firm must have been in operation for the last twenty (20) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation).

2.0 The firm must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation) Architectural, Engineering and Interior Design consultancy services, at least five (5) completed projects of similar nature like educational and training facilities, conference centers, convention halls and other related projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project and must be able to submit individual certification by clients of satisfactory performance for at least three (3) of the required five (5) projects.

3.0 The principal of Managing Officer must be a Registered Architect with at least twenty (20) years experience in architectural design and coordinating team efforts in Architectural, Engineering and Interior Design.

4.0 The key personnel should be Registered Architect/s, Interior Designer/s and Engineer/s with at least fifteen (15) years design experience.

5.0 The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) must be at least 60% owned by a Filipino citizen.

6.0 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint venture agreement. The joint venture must have rendered Architectural, Engineering and Interior Design consultancy services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.

The **quality-cost** based evaluation procedure stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 9184 shall be adopted for this consultancy service requirement.

Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat on January 20 to 28, 2005 for a non-refundable fee of P200.00, Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila and must be submitted duly accomplished to the same office not later than 4:30 p.m. on January 31, 2005.

The provisions of **Republic Act No. 9184** and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any consultant/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the consultant for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Vice-Chairman

(PDI - Jan. 19 & 27, 2005)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

Shop RECEPTIONIST at least College level female / 21-28 years old Bring Resume at Goldcars 72N Roxas Sto Domingo Quezon City look for Bella Paranable

WANTED DENTIST OPTOMETRIST FEMALE 9362115

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

BSP•BSN•PT•MT
Any Allied Health Grads up to P45T/ Mo! 8922818

Lady Dentist UE Graduate Prof 2003-04 Board Passer 0917-9039839 / 682-0166

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MALE/FEMALE

WANTED
AUDITOR / BOOKKEEPER, MARKETING / ROVING SUPERVISOR w/Retail Exp. Promos w /Dept. Str. Exp. w/3-5yrs. Exp. Send Resume Shirley Dacles 4th Flr. Dolmar Bldg., Edsa, Mandaluyong City 726-6332

NFA imports rice for food security

THE NATIONAL Food Authority today clarified that there are no irregularities in its rice importation program and that its recently-awarded rice import volume of 320,000 metric tons is meant to augment the agency's food security stocks.

NFA Administrator Gregorio Y. Tan, Jr. explained that the volume of the government's rice imports is arrived at based on the quarterly assessment of the Inter-Agency Committee on Rice and Cereals whose members include the NFA, Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS), National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Farmers Action Council (NFAC), the weather Bureau PAG-ASA, and the Department of Agriculture as chair of the Committee. The National Irrigation Association and PhilRice are members on call.

"We cannot afford to commit the same mistake as in 1995 when government did not have sufficient buffer stock of rice during the lean months. Given that lesson, we have to be proactive in ensuring that the NFA will always have enough rice supply at any given time. This is necessary to make us effective in responding to emergency situations like providing rice for relief during calamities," Tan said.

Tan said the agriculture sector has been successful in increasing productivity but it is not enough to even out the increase in consumption. Records will show, according to Tan, that some corn-eating provinces have now shifted to eating rice due to the increase in corn prices. He also said that with the steep increase in wheat prices, consumers who previously preferred bread and bakery products now eat more rice thereby increasing the country's rice consumption requirement.

Tan also noted the BAS' report that this year's per capita consumption for rice had increased from 105 kilogram/person/year to 109 kilogram/person/year.

He said the government's rice imports this year are intended to avert the effects of El Niño which may delay, if not substantially reduce the summer harvests.

Last January 6, a public bidding was held for the supply of 320,000 metric tons of rice attended by representatives from the Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC) and the Commission on Audit (CoA) while members of the media observed the proceedings.

Tan said the US$281.98 quoted price is a CIF quote and followed the strict requirements under RA9184 or the Government Procurement Law.

Meanwhile, Tan said the public can now buy affordable rice and grocery items such as cooking oil, noodles, sardines and sugar from authorized NFA rolling stores deployed around Metro Manila.

Tan assured the public that the NFA will continue to sell NFA rice at P16 per kilogram and P18 per kilogram for regular-milled and well-milled rice, respectively.

He also said that the staple will be available for sale in NFA-accredited outlets such as the Bigasan ni Gloria sa Palengke (BGP), Tindahan ni Gloria sa Barangay (TGB), Targeted Rice Distribution Program (TRDP) and its mobile stores.

For more inquiries, suggestions and complaints, the public may send text messages via the Text NFA Program to 0917-6210927.

NFA distributes food coupons

THE NATIONAL Food Authority (NFA), together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other participating government and private institutions in Region XII recently distributed food coupons to the 55 beneficiaries of the Food for Work Program (FWP) in Mayo, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat.

NFA Sultan Kudarat provincial manager Jose Danilo V. Nieves said that the distribution of coupons to the FWP beneficiaries is part of the government's program to address the basic food and socio-economic needs of the less privileged families in the province.

The NFA and the DSWD in Region XII targeted 10,000 families as beneficiaries of the program. Under the FWP, each family-beneficiary will receive food cash allowance of P1,200 within six months, starting December 2004 to May this year. Sultan Kudarat is among the five provinces that will benefit from the Food for Work Program of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

For any inquiry and comment on the food coupons distribution of NFA, the public may send text messages through 0917-6210927.

POEA 24-HR HOTLINES 722-1144 • 722-1155

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For our Market Executive (Asean Region)
Willing to be assigned in Manila

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Interested applicants must submit their 2-page CV with 2x2 picture, stating current/expected salary to:

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : **February 22, 2005**, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1, Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following items:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MIN. BID PRICE
	SCHEDULE-I: Simultaneous Public Bidding at NPC Baguio Office and at NPC Head Office, Diliman, Quezon City	
-1-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable Items consisting of junk Heavy Equipment (Bulldozer, Grader, Dump-Truck, Pay-Loader, Fork-Lift and Bus-body) and used General Plant Parts and discarded Office Equipment. Located at Ambuklao Hydro-Electric Power Plant, Bokod Town, Benguet Province.	P575,300.00 per lot
-2-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable and junk Vehicles consisting of Two (2) units Passenger Bus (SAN-307 / SDG-267). One (1) unit Toyota L/C Jeep (SAN-309), One (1) unit Isuzu Pick-up (SCC-456) and dilapidated/totally junk Ford-Fiera. Located at Ambuklao Hydro-Electric Power Plant, Bokod Town, Benguet Province.	P175,000.00 per lot
-3-	One (1) Lot: Unserviceable Items consisting of Electrical Cables assorted types, sizes and lengths, Junk Heavy Equipment (3 units Dump Truck) and discarded / used items, including expired chemicals, old records, cartons and newspapers). Located at Binga Hydro-Electric Power Plant, Itogon Town, Bengeut Province.	P729,000.00 per lot
	SCHEDULE-II: NPC Head Office, Solarium, Diliman, Quezon City.	
-1-	One (1) lot: Unserviceable, junk and scrap items consisting of used General Plant Parts and Office Equipment, Guest House Furnishings, Motor Pool and Laboratory parts. Located at Magat River HEP in Brgy. Aguinaldo, Ramon Town, Isabela Province.	P862,000.00 per lot
-2-	One (1) lot: Barite, consisting of 4,114 bags, 100 lbs/bag Located at Mak-Ban Geothermal Power Plant, Bay Town, Laguna Province.	P261.00 per bag

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN 2003 ORIGINAL (OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY) FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY

All interested parties who wish to secure bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Tax Identification Card or Income Tax Return.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00 / Schedule from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. / Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Bidders for Schedule-I may secure the Bid Forms at Upper Agno Project Office, Plaza Natalia Bldg., Nagulian Road, Baguio City. Deadline for Issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, February 14, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department
FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI – Jan. 27, 28 & 29, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue Diliman, Quezon City

Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

SSS CARD PRODUCTION MAINTENANCE SERVICES

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting bidders for the one-year maintenance service requirements (hardware and software) of SSS' Card Production system.

The aforementioned services are aimed at providing the SSS a preventive and proactive means of ensuring the reasonable level of performance of its ID Processing Center.

Approved Budget for the Contract – P45,900,000.00
Contract Duration – One (1) year
Source of Fund – 2005 Interim Budget – M/R Furniture & Equipment – Hardware & Supplies & Materials

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements	January 27, 2005 to February 10 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	February 15, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P20,000.00	February 18, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-bid Conference	Feb. 22, 2005 2:00 p.m.	Bidding Room, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491.

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act."

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – January 27, 2005)

NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
NHI Bldg., T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila
P.O. Box 3398, Manila

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

(In compliance with RA 7041)

ACCOUNTANT III, SG-18, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-A3-1-1998. Bachelor's degree in Commerce/Business Administration, major in Accounting; 2 years of relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; RA 1080 (CPA).

PLANNING OFFICER III, SG-18, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-PLO3-1-1998. Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 2 years of relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; CS Professional eligibility.

RECORDS OFFICER III, SG-18, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-RO3-1-1998. Bachelor's degree; 2 years of relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; CS Professional eligibility.

BOOKKEEPER, SG-08, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-BKP-1-1998. Completion of two years studies in college, preferably for a course leading to a BS Commerce/Business Administration degree; 1 year of relevant experience; 4 hours of relevant training; CS Subprofessional/first level eligibility

MASON I, SG-3, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-MSN1-2-1998. Elementary school graduate. Eligibility: Mason/MC 11, s. 1996, Cat. I.

SENIOR HISTORY RESEARCHER, SG-18, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-SRHR-4-1998. Completion of academic requirements for a Master's degree relevant to the job, preferably major in History and/or Museology; two (2) years relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; CS Professional/appropriate eligibility for 2nd level position.

HISTORY RESEARCHER II, SG-14, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-HTRYR2-8 & 30-1998. Bachelor's degree relevant to the job, preferably major in History or Museology; one year relevant experience and 4 hours relevant training, preferably in museology/curatorship; CS Professional/2nd level eligibility.

MUSEUM TECHNICIAN I, SG-06, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-MUST1-12-1998. Completion of two years studies in college; or high school graduate with relevant vocational/trade course; CS Subprofessional/Museum Technician/appropriate eligibility for first level position

SHRINE GUIDE, SG-6, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-SHRG-6 & 13-1998. Completion of two years studies in college (preferably with units in history/social sciences/communication-arts); CS Subprofessional/first level eligibility.

SECURITY GUARD II, SG-5, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-SECG2-3-1998. Completion of secondary school course with relevant training Security Guard license (CSC MC 11, s. 1996, Cat. II).

SECURITY GUARD I, SG-3, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-SECG1-8 & 11-1998. Completion of secondary school course with relevant training. Security Guard license; CSC MC 11, s. 1996, Cat. II.

UTILITY WORKER I, SG-1, Item Nos. NHI-NCCAC-UTW1-11-1998. Must be able to read and write

CLERK II, SG-4 Item No. NHI-NCCAC-CK2-4-1998. Completion of two years studies in college; CS Subprofessional/First level eligibility.

ARTIST ILLUSTRATOR II, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-AI2-2-1998. Completion of two years studies in college or high school graduate with relevant vocational/trade course; 1 year of relevant experience; 4 hours of relevant training; Career Service Subprofessional.

A Singapore Brand skin care and health supplement company is launching their products in the Philippines and is looking for the following key position

Job Title:

Advertising Marketing Executive

Requirement:

a. 3-5 years in product advertisement & marketing field (MLM)
b. Must be familiar with Skin Care & Health Supplement products
c. Graduate of marketing or any related field
d. Articulate, persuasive and proficient in expressing new ideas
e. Excellent in verbal and communication skills, knowledgeable in copywriting
f. Highly personable appearance
g. Knowledgeable in graphics design related to advertising & brochure will be an added advantage

Interested Applicants can submit their resumé, with a recent photograph attached, via email to The Recruiter, resumé@iweeds.com

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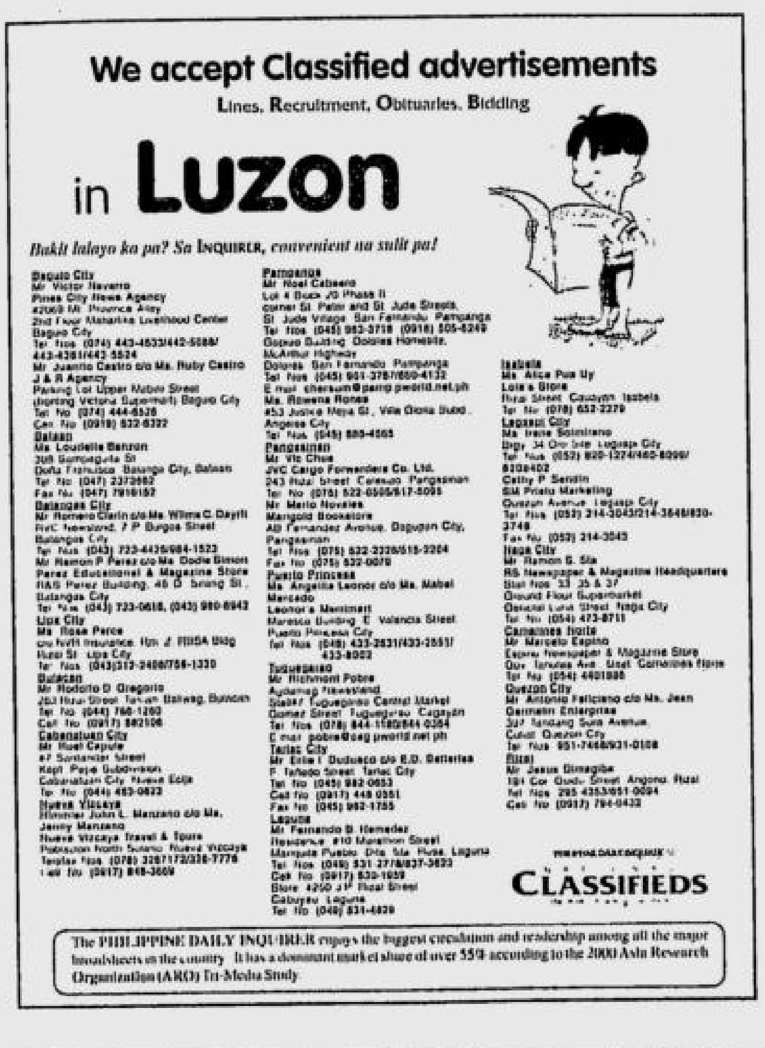
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

We are announcing the dissolution of MARUSO PHILIPPINES CORPORATION effective December 31, 2004 as per board resolution dated December 20, 2004.

We are inviting all creditors and concern parties to contact us for any final settlement at 702 Citystate Centre, Shaw Blvd., Pasig City.

Any transaction entered on and before the said date will be no longer entertained.

(PDI–Jan. 20, 27 & Feb. 3, 2005)



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PSALM POWER SECTOR ASSETS & LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (*"PSALM"*) Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee (*"Committee"*) invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

Cebu II Diesel Power Plant Equipment, Components, Auxiliaries and Accessories located at Barrio Talavera, Toledo City, Cebu

(the *"Asset"*). The Asset is being sold on an *"as is where is"* basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest (*"LOI"*) to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on February 8, 2005 (the *"LOI Submission Deadline"*). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred U.S. Dollars (U.S. $500.00) (the *"Participation Fee"*). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party.

The Bidding Package shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from January 26, 2005 until February 9, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "Deadline") at the PSALM Office. Only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence	:	*January 27 to February 28, 2005*
Pre-bid Conference	:	*February 17, 2005*
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM	:	*March 15, 2005*

A single stage two-envelope bidding system has been adopted. Other details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package. References to dates and times in this notice shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its total bid price in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202, fax number (632) 8405341 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify any party for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **VINCENT S. PEREZ, JR.**
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Jan. 26, 27 & 28, 2005)

CEPALCO

CAGAYAN ELECTRIC POWER & LIGHT CO., INC.
33 Don Toribio Chavez St., Cagayan de Oro City

NOTICE OF EXTENSION OF DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION

of the Expression of Intent to Bid for the Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Commissioning, Financing and Operation of a 20MW Diesel Power Plant

All Parties who are interested to plan, design, finance, construct, commission, own, operate, and maintain a generating facility, which shall supply a portion of the electricity requirements of CEPALCO in Cagayan de Oro City, the Philippines, are hereby informed that the deadline of submission of their Expression of Intent to Bid has been extended to **5PM (Philippine Time) of February 11, 2005**. The Expression of Intent to Bid together with a brief description of their company, experiences in actual power plant project design, installation, commissioning and operations, as well as their company's statement of financial conditions and bank references, which shall be the bases for pre-qualification, must be sent to:

The Chairman
Power Supply Bidding Task Force (PSBTF)
Cagayan Electric Power & Light Co., Inc.
33 Toribio Chavez St., Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines
Tel. +63 8822 723254/725211; Fax: +63 8822 726019
Email: psbtf@cepalco.com.ph

An invitation to participate in the Pre-Bid Conference to be held in Cagayan de Oro City will be sent not later than **February 18, 2005** only to those who have expressed their intention and had been adjudged as pre-qualified by the CEPALCO PSBTF to bid in the project.

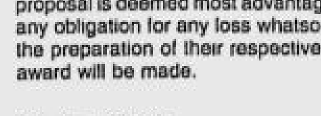
(SGD.) **CECILIO U. SUMAOY**
Chairman, Power Supply Bidding Task Force
CEPALCO

26 January 2005

(PDI--Jan. 27, 2005)

TRANSCO OPENS SUBSTATION IN BIÑAN

THE National Transmission Corp. (TransCo) has successfully relieved the transmission line congestion in South Luzon with the recent completion and energization of its newly upgraded 230-kilovolt (kV) Biñan-Dasmariñas transmission line. The 14.5-km line can now carry 1,200 MW of electricity, or quadruple its previous capacity, thereby providing enough capacity for electricity generated by the large power plants in South Luzon including the natural gas-fired power plants and effectively securing the electricity supply in the region for the medium term. In photo, Transco President and CEO Dr. Alan T. Ortiz (center, foreground) leads the switch-on rites at TransCo's substation in Binan, Laguna together with other TransCo executives and employees.



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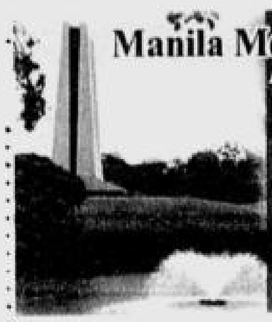
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Salvador H. Laurel

former Vice-President of the Republic of the Philippines
and a true Nacionalista in words and deeds,
on the ocassion of his first death anniversary.

Doy was both mentor as well as a friend to those of us
who had the chance to share his life.
His ideals will constantly be our guide.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate;
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

**DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS •
DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS •
FREE OBIT DESIGN**

ADELINA PURA CLAVECILLA

Joyously Joined her Creator on January 25, 2005

Relatives and Friends are requested to join her family in prayers for her eternal repose.

Her Husband, **Dr. Wigberto P. Clavecilla, Sr.**

Her children **Norma** and **Edgardo A. Garcia**, **Wigberto, Jr.** and
Carmencita de Borja, **Roberto** and **Teresita Maliwat**, **Ronaldo** and
Teresa Galang and, **Winston** and **Milagros Lao**.

Her grandchildren **DitDit** and **Raffy Ungson**, **Gary**, **Billie** and **Vince de Guzman**, **Ina
Lea** and **Marcelo Labre**, **Toogy** and **Chino**
Anna and **Jon Eng**, **Michelle**, **Triggy** and **Robby**
Kim, **Kathy** and **Genaro**
Nina

Her great grandchildren, **Enrico Ungson**
Enrique Labre and **Natalia Labre**

Her remains lie in state at the Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows Subd., Pasig City.
The funeral Mass will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2005 at 10 a.m. at Christ the King.
Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

Primitiva Abad Remulla

of Toclong, Imus, Cavite

*Peacefully joined our Lord
on January 25, 2005 at the age of 98.*

Her loving sister **ROSING**; children **MINIANG** and **CARDO**, **NENE** and **OSCAR** (†), **BOY** and **MELY**, **AIDA** and **ROGER**, **EDDIE** and **ZENY**, **CORRIE** and **MANNY**; grandchildren and great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Bahay Ugnayan – Sanson Vigil Spaces,
145 Bayan Luma 1, Imus, Cavite.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 29, 2005
after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Imus Cathedral.

In loving memory of

CASIMIRO ISIDRO REYES

*on his 2nd death anniversary
who died on January 27, 2003*

Holy masses will be offered at the following churches:

Sto. Tomas de Villanueva Parish, Santolan Pasig City	6 a.m.
Monasterio de Sta. Clara Church, Katipunan Ave., Q.C.	6 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Road 8, Proj. 6, Q.C.	6 p.m.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Q.C.	6:30 p.m.
Parish of Our Lady of the Abandoned, Sta. Elena, Marikina ...	6 p.m.

**The family requests relatives, friends and pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.**

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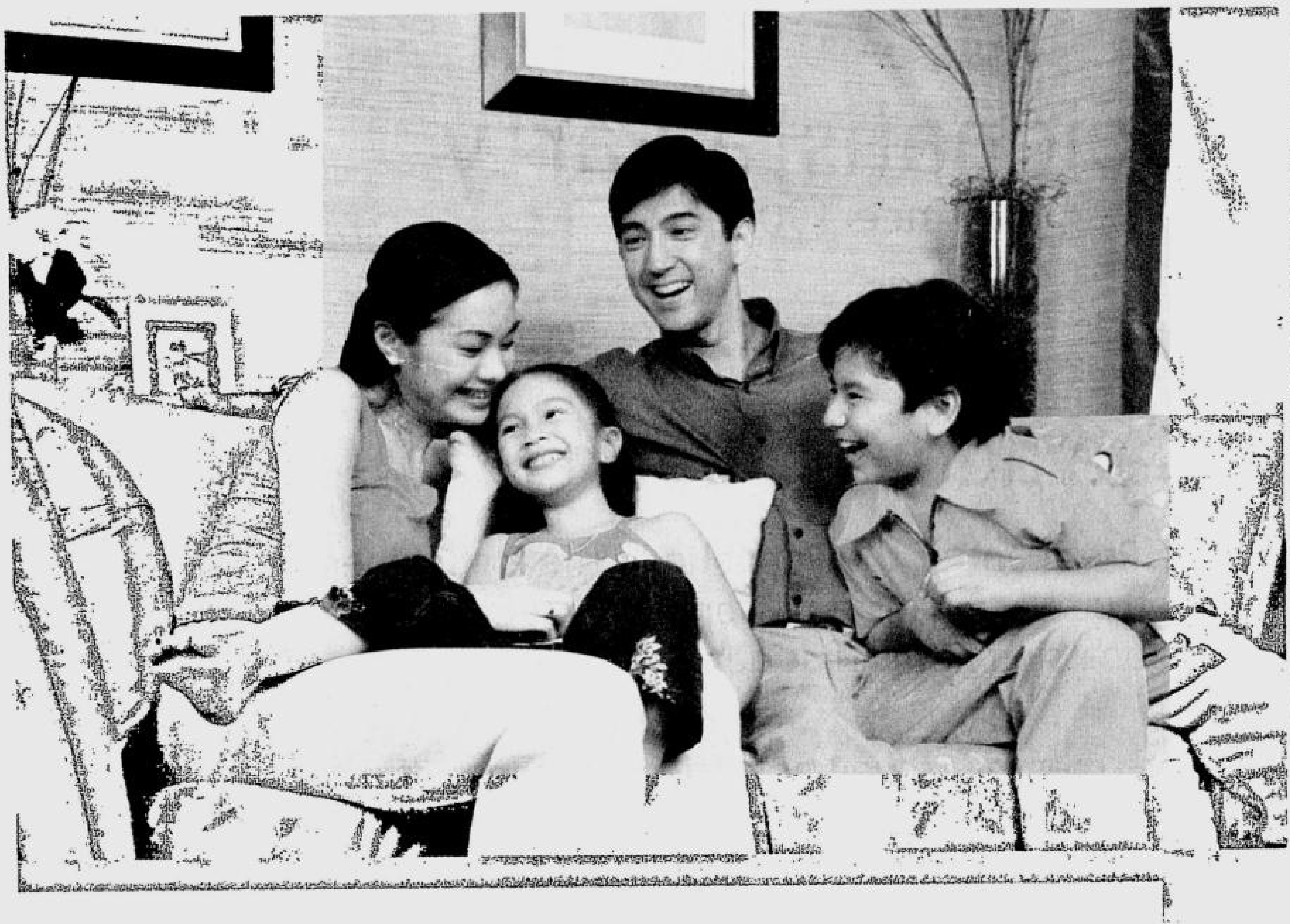

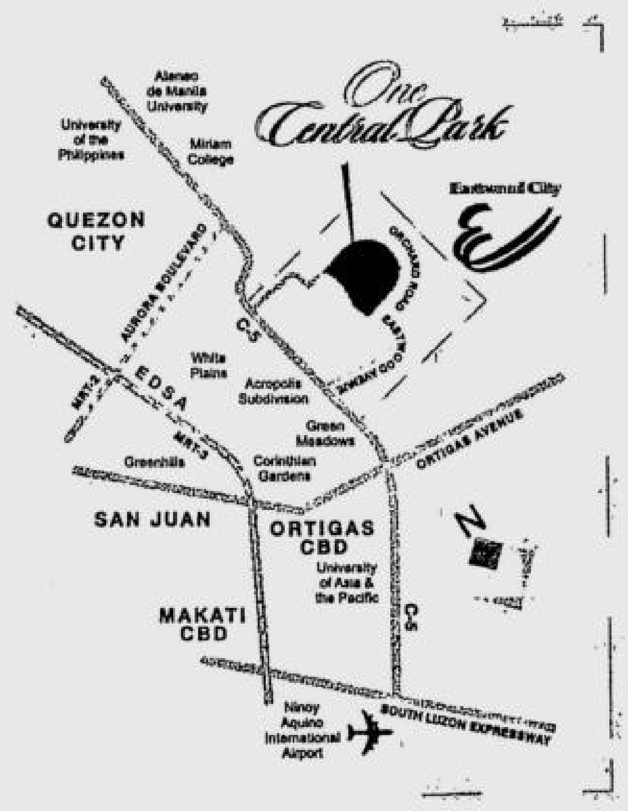
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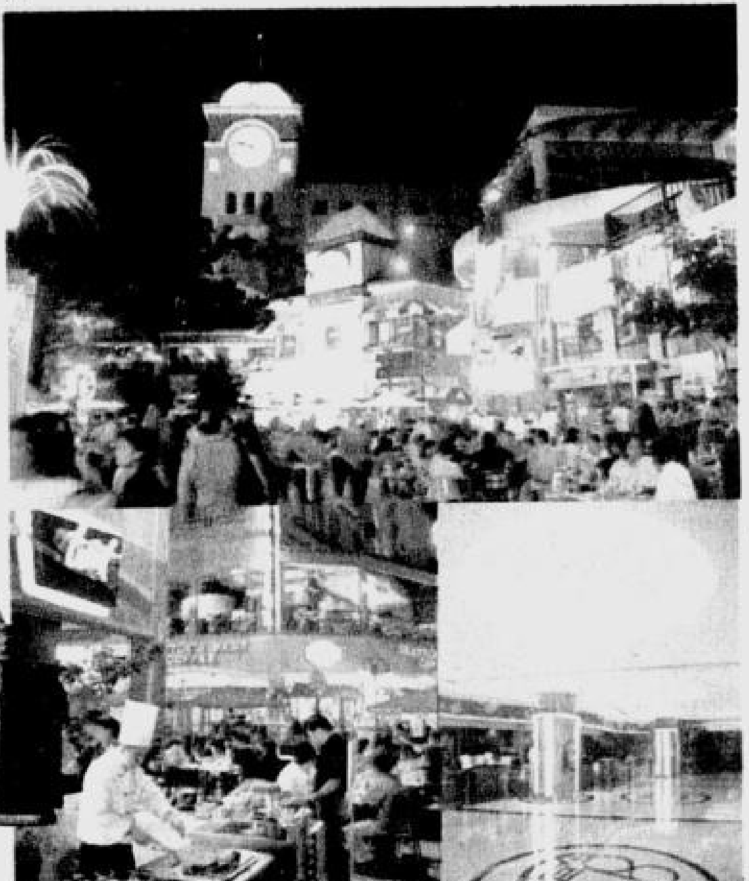

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ● TUESDAY FITNESS ● WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Your bread and butter (pudding)

MARAMI po akong tinapay sa bahay. **My children love bread and I use it for their *baon*. Do you have a recipe for pudding?**

PAZ PEREZ

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Since you called me Madame, how can I refuse? Here it is, the best Bread and Butter Pudding with Vanilla Sauce for you and your family to enjoy! *Bon appetit!*

5 eggs
1 c sugar
½ c softened butter, cut up
2 tsp vanilla powder or 3 tsp vanilla extract
1/8 tsp nutmeg, optional
½ tsp cinnamon
2 c cream
4 c bread (loaf, French or raisin will do) preferably a day old, crusts removed and sliced into 1-inch cubes
¼ c raisins
Powdered sugar, for dusting
Fresh strawberries sliced and served on the side (optional)
Whipped cream, served on the side (optional)

Cream eggs, butter and sugar until smooth. Add the rest of the ingredients except bread until well blended with a whisk. Let bread soak in mixture for an hour, mixing occasionally.

Pre-heat oven to 350°F. Bake for 40 minutes or until top is golden. Dust with powdered sugar. Serve warm with sauce, whipped cream and strawberries.

Sauce:
1 c cream
1 c sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tbsp butter
2 tsp cornstarch
¼ c rum (Tanduay is good)
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped or 1 tsp vanilla powder or extract

YOU can give leftover bread a tasty makeover by turning it into a pudding, like this old-fashioned version.

Combine ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Whisk until slightly thick, cool and serve with pudding.

More culinary terms

Your list of French culinary terms was very useful....Was wondering if you could do Spanish and Italian (lists, too)?

BEA H.

I'm glad you enjoyed that series, Bea. I know a lot of people found it useful, too. I'm starting here a list of Spanish terms hoping that people will stop asking me for a recipe of *Almontigas*! What is *Almontigas*? Beats me! I think they're hard, badly made meatballs. Keep reading succeeding issues of KR to complete the list.

A·la plancha—grilled, usually with oil, garlic and parsley
A la sal—cooked in blocks of or in a salt crust
Adobo—marinated/cooked in vinegar and spices, the origin of our *adobo*
Almondigas—meatballs
Alcachofa—artichoke
Allioli—garlic mayonnaise
Alubias—type of beans
Anchoa—anchovies
Angulas—baby eel prepared by sauteing in olive oil, garlic and chili peppers
Al horno—baked in the oven
Arroz a la Marinera—rice and seafood cooked together
Arroz—rice
Arroz Negro—black rice, rice cooked in squid ink
Asador—charcoal grill/roaster
Asadores—grill chef/restaurants specializing in grilled entrees
Azafran—saffron

I like eating *tilapia*. Please give me other ways of preparing this other than fried. Thanks.

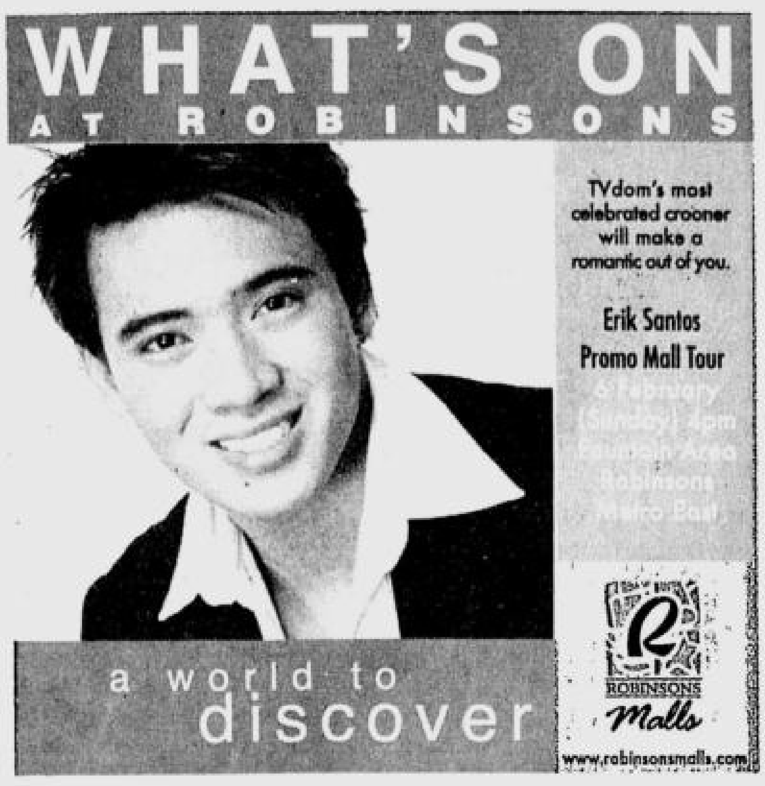
SASHA

4 tilapia recipes

Tilapia has become quite popular

YOUR BREAD/ C3

After learning common French cooking terms, you now start your Spanish 'lessons'



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HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

February 1,2,3,5 & 7(Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, Saturday & Monday) 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A) **GUMPASTE FLOWER MAKING by: Heny Sison*** A unique method of making gum paste using a foam pad, a pair of scissors and cutters. The course covers: the Rose, Carnation, Stephanotis, Tulips, Filler Flowers, Catlleya, Christmas Holy, Poinsettia, Daisy, Tiger Lily and Quick Leaves. Learn how to use airbrush and edible petal dust to color the flowers and bunch them into a bouquet. **Full participation.P5,000**

February 1,2,3,5 & 7(Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, Saturday & Monday) 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **ADVANCED CAKE DECORATION by: Heny Sison*** This course covers: baking of fruitcake, covering it with marzipan then with rolled fondant. Learn South African and Australian methods using delicate icing wings, curtainings, ribbon insertion done on rolled fondant, quilting & cut - outs. Prerequisite: MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION. **Full participation.P10,000**

February (Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **COMMERCIAL BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP by: Chef Jill Sandique**, Food Consultant & Food Stylist. Blue Ribbon graduate at Peter Kump,s New York Cooking School* Spanish Bread, Pandesal, Hotdog Bun, Pan de Coco, Choco Bread Hamburger Bun, Meat Roll & Pig Pie plus bonus recipes! **P2,500**

February 5 (Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE II by: Jackie H. Alleje**, owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet)* This class continues the discussion on the diet & healthy nutrition with recipes of Stage II. Participants will share their experience from stage I. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. **P2,800**

February 8 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jackie H. Alleje*** This class will guide you through the theory and the recipes of Phase I – the strictest phase of the diet and how to prepare them in your home. All participants will be weighed on the onset of the program. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo.**P2,800**

February 9 (Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**NEW CLASS! FLATBREADS, DIPS & SPREADS WORKSHOPby: Heny Sison Flatbreads:** Tender Focaccia, Carta di Musica (Sardinian parchment bread), Lavosh, Pita Bread, Thin Cornmeal TortillaDips & Spreads: Chicken Liver Pâté, Smoked Salmon, Tapenade, Pesto, Zahtar & Hot Artichoke Dip. **P2,500**

February 10 (Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (classroom A)**BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison*** Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. **P1,500**

February 10 (Thursday)2:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) **ROMANTIC VALENTINE DINNER by: Chef Aileen Anastacio-Sandoval**, owner of Goodies N' Sweet Bakeshop & C'est Si Bon, Dean's list graduate of Culinary at the California Culinary Academy* Spinach Cappuccino Soup, Nut Crusted Goat Cheese Salad with Strawberry Vinaigrette, Roasted Tenderloin with Two Sauces, Truffle Cream Sauce and Garlic & Rosemary sauce with Mashed Potatoes and Green Beans. **P1,700**

February 11 (Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **DOUGHNUT WORKSHOPby: Chef Jane Paredes**, Food Consultant, trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School. * **Recipes:** Sugar, Honey – Glazed, Caramel Pecan, Chocolate Nut, Mango Glazed, Chocolate Bavarian, Blueberry Filled, Strawberry Filled, Apple Filled, Twist Cinnamon Sugar, Dulce de Leche, Cream Cheese Honey, Boston Cream, Sour Cream Cake Doughnut & Creamy Glazed. **P 2,500**

February 12 (Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m **SECRETS NO MORE! P3,000by: Heny Sison**Decadent Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing & Caramel Sauce, Lemon Torte, Ensaymada, Almond Sanzrival, Strawberry Shortcake & Ube Cake.**P 2,500**

February 12 (Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE II by: Ms. Jackie H. Alleje*** This class continues the discussion on the diet & healthy nutrition with recipes of Stage II. Participants will share their experience from stage I. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo.**P2,800**

February 14 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**TEMPTING CHOCOLATE DESSERTS I By: Chef Jill Sandique*** Flourless Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Souffle, Chocolate Bread Pudding, Dark Chocolate Crème Brulee, Swiss Chocolate Fondue and Third Avenue Fudge Cookies. **P1,500**

February 15 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.(classroom A) **JAPANESE RICE TOPPINGby: Chef Koichi Kondo**, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants**Recipes:** Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsu-don (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Tori Teriyaki-don (Chicken Teriyaki) plus bonus Recipe: Chahan (Japanese Fried Rice). **P1,700**

February 15 (Tuesday)1:30 – 5:30 p.m. (classroom A) **SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo**, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants* Temaki-Zushi (Do-It Yourself Sushi Rolls), Bara-Zushi (Scattered Sushi), Inari-Zushi (Sushi Pockets), Futo-Maki Zushi (Thick-Rolled Sushi), Teka-Maki (Hand-rolled Tuna Sushi), Kappa-Maki (Sea Cucumber Sushi). **P1,700**

February 16 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE COOKING by: Chef Katherine Sion** * A more comprehensive presentation on Chinese cookery and techniques. The chef will give you an overview of China's culinary history and its cuisine's essentials. Regional food will be taught including meat, poultry, seafood and vegetable cookery. Practical tips on menu planning and manner of serving will also be included. Menu: Dumpling Soup, Drunken Chicken, Prawns with Sweet & Spicy Sauce, Braised Ox Tail with Beancurd Stick in Pot, Saute Broccoli with Babycorn and Button Mushroom in Oyster Sauce, Roast Pork Spareribs, Young Chow Fried Rice and Mango Pudding. **P2,500**

February 17 (Thursday)9:30 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca**, floral designer* Learn the theories, styles, trends, techniques, sourcing, flower care & maintenance, basic form, arrangements and flower for wedding. **Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500**

February 18 (Friday)11:00 – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **JAPANESE COOKING I (All Time Favorite Japanese Recipes)by: Chef Koichi Kondo*** Miso Soup, Tempura, Nimono, Yakimono, California Maki, Chilled Soba, Noodles with Nori, Skewered Dumplings with Brown Sauce.**P1,700**

February 19 (Saturday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **SPECIAL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT** by: Glenn Remorca* Learn the different styles of table arrangement & home decors. Demonstration and hands-on production. **P3,000**

February 19 (Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS! OYSTER, MUSSELS and SHRIMP CLASS by: Chef Jane Paredes** Oyster Rockefeller, two-cheese, mushroom & bacon, pate & onion, Champagne Sabayon, Berb & Garlic, Bacon & Cheese, Pimiento & Caper, Wild Mushroom, Tomato-Pesto, Shrimp Cocktail, Shrimp & Fruit Salad, Shrimp with Mango & Papaya Salad, Crispy Soft Shell Crab with Mesclun Salad & Lime-Cilantro Dressing. **P2,000***

February 21 (Monday) 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **KOREAN COOKING I: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Cecile Park**, owner of Silla Korean Restaurant & food consultant to various Korean restaurants in Metro Manila* Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seasweed, Beef or Tahong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim. **P2,500**

February 22 (Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! SALADS & MODERN SAUCES By: Chef Jane Paredes** *Green Salad Assembly w/ 3 dressings: Light Ranch Dressing, Walnut & Blue Cheese Vinaigrette, Carrot & Basil Oil, Grilled Chicken & Crispy Noodles Salad w/ Sesame Dressing, Modern Caesar Salad w/ easy to make dressing, Potato Apple & Smoked Bacon Salad w/ Warm Vinaigrette, Pineapple Barbados w/ Rum Butterscotch Sauce. **P1,700**

February 22 (Tuesday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) **MANY WAYS TO COOK CHICKEN by: Chef Aileen Anastacio-Sandoval** * Citrus-Ginger Grilled Chicken, Chicken Cacciatore, Chicken Inasal, Thai Style Grilled Chicken, Roasted Chicken with Lemon, Garlic & Rosemary, Buffalo Wings and Chicken Bulgogi. **P1,700**

February 23 (Wednesday) 9:00 am-12:30 pm. (clasroom A) **BUNDT CAKES by: Heny Sison** * Chocolate -Cheese Swirled Cake, Marbled Coffee Cake, Cinnamon Streusel Cake, Blueberry Coffee Cake and Orange Rum Cake. **P 1,500**

February 23 (Wednesday) 1:30 pm.- 5:00 pm. (clasroom A) **CHEESECAKE GALLERY by: Heny Sison** *Cappuccino Cheesecake, New York Cheesecake, Pastillas de Leche Cheesecake, Caramel Cheesecake, White Chocolate, Chunk Macademia Nut Cheesecake and Piña Colada Cheesecake.**P 1,500**

February 24 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **BAKING 101 by: Chef Jill Sandique** *Peach Upside Down Cake, Triple Chocolate Brownies, Chocolate Cream Pie, Pavlova, Pecan Pie Bars and Russian Tea Cakes.**P1,500**

February 25 (Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **BAKING 102 by: Chef Jill Sandique*** Dark Chocolate Cake with Caramel Sauce, Sour Cream Streusel Coffee Cake, Rum Butter Cake, Fruit Tarts, Mango Bars and Sesame Spice Cookies. **P1,500**

February 26 (Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A) **NEW CLASS! CHOP TILL YOU DROP by: Chef Jane Paredes*** We'll teach you the basics of knife skills like a professional chef. You'll be slicing, chopping & cooking! **P1,200**

February 26 (Saturday)1:30 – 5:30 p.m. (classroom A) **BASIC RESTAURANT SERVICE SKILLS by: Cecile Mauricio**, former editor of Mabuhay Philippines (Philippine Airlines' in-flight magazine), is a communication and marketing consultant for various restaurants.* Restaurant staff who can communicate well is the key to improved sales and service. A concise workshop for new waiters and waitresses, new restaurant owners, or a refresher course for regular staff. **Course outline:** Communication Skills, Personality Development, Customer Service, Sales & Marketing Concepts and Service Strategies.**P1,200**

February 26 (Saturday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B)**TALKING BREADS: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Jill Sandique**Chung Sik Bao (Chinese Buns), Meat Floss Buns, Pineapple Skin Bread, Mexican Bread, Green Tea Twist, Red Bean Twist, Peanut Twist, Jam Rolls, Pineapple Braid, Coconut Buns, Custard & Chocolate Chips, Fruit & Custard, Meat Floss & Ham Sandwich, Mixed Vegetable Braid, Bacon Bun, Meat Floss & Puff Pastry Sandwich, Spring Onion Roll, Sweet Corn & Ham, Pizza Bread, Ham & Egg and Spinach and White Sauce Bun. **P2,500**

February 28 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m (classroom A) **DIMSUM III: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sion*** Steamed Glutinous Rice with Chicken, Fried Beancurd Roll with Sweet & Spicy Sauce, Boiled Meat Potstickers, Fried Dumpling with Scallops, Curry Chicken Dumpling and Steamed Beef Ball. **P2,500**

HENY SISON AT JULIUS MAGGI KITCHEN
Nestle Bldg. #31 Plaza Drive,Rockwell Center, Makati City

February 21 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **MY FAVORITE CAKES** Caramel Cake II, Banana Nut Cake, Pandan – MacapunoCake,Flourless Chocolate Cake, Peach Walnut Torte and Brazo de Mercedes. **P1,500***

February 25 (Friday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m. **BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS** Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. **P1,500***

February 28 (Monday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m **PARADE OF PIES, TARTS, CHEESECAKES** French Apple Pie with Streusel Topping and Crème Anglaise Sauce, Turtle Pie, Banana Cream Pie with Whipped Cream and Caramel Topping, Mango Tart, Peach Walnut Pie, Blueberry Cheesecake and White Chocolate Cheesecake.) **P1,700***

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CARLOS MORALES Lost 26 lbs. on his programme

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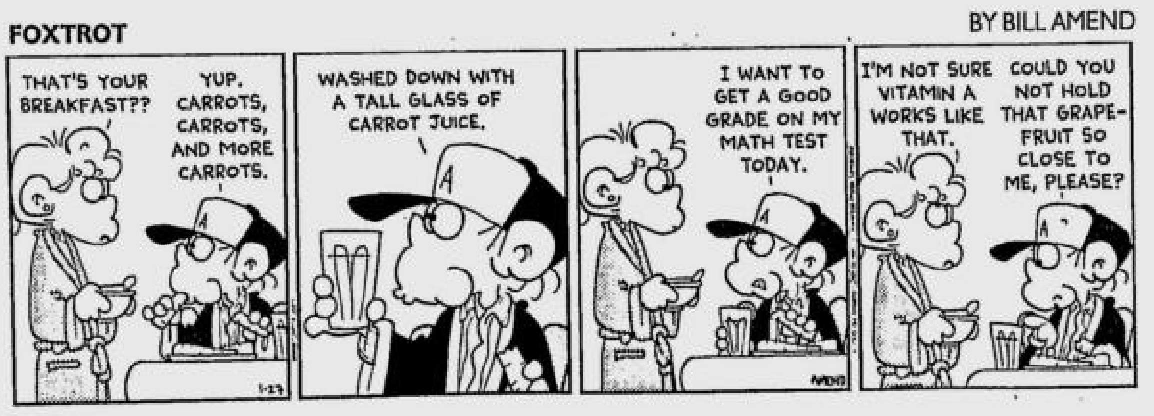
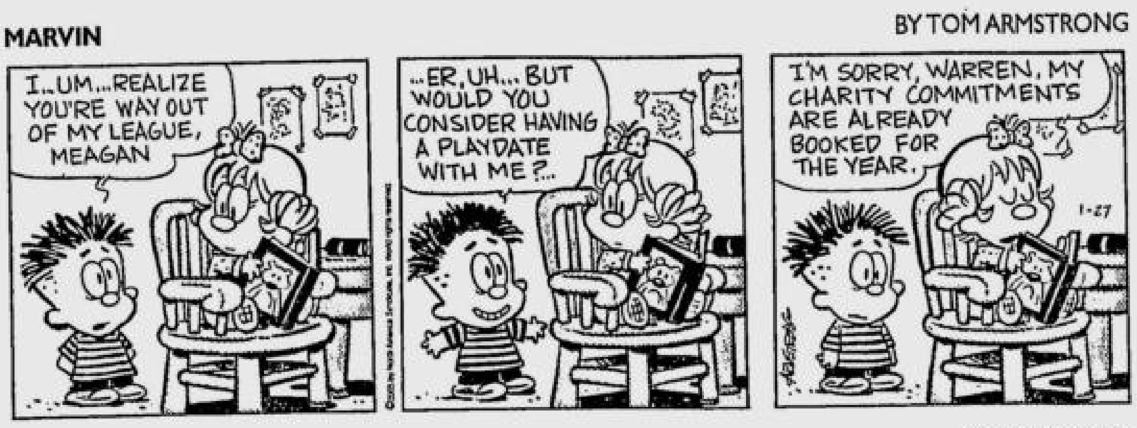
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


THAT'S YOUR BREAKFAST??
YUP. CARROTS, CARROTS, AND MORE CARROTS.
WASHED DOWN WITH A TALL GLASS OF CARROT JUICE.
I WANT TO GET A GOOD GRADE ON MY MATH TEST TODAY.
I'M NOT SURE VITAMIN A WORKS LIKE THAT.
COULD YOU NOT HOLD THAT GRAPEFRUIT SO CLOSE TO ME, PLEASE?

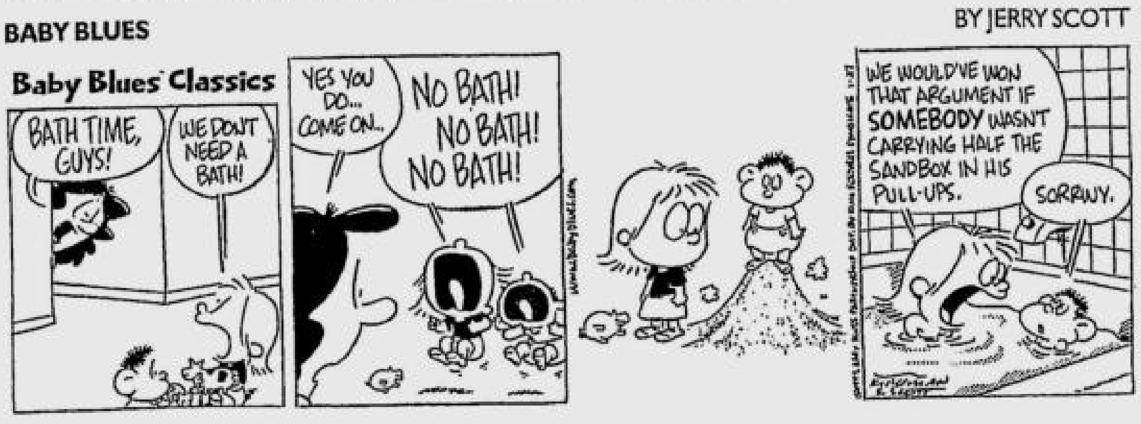
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I..UM...REALIZE YOU'RE WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE, MEAGAN
...ER, UH... BUT WOULD YOU CONSIDER HAVING A PLAYDATE WITH ME?...
I'M SORRY, WARREN, MY CHARITY COMMITMENTS ARE ALREADY BOOKED FOR THE YEAR.

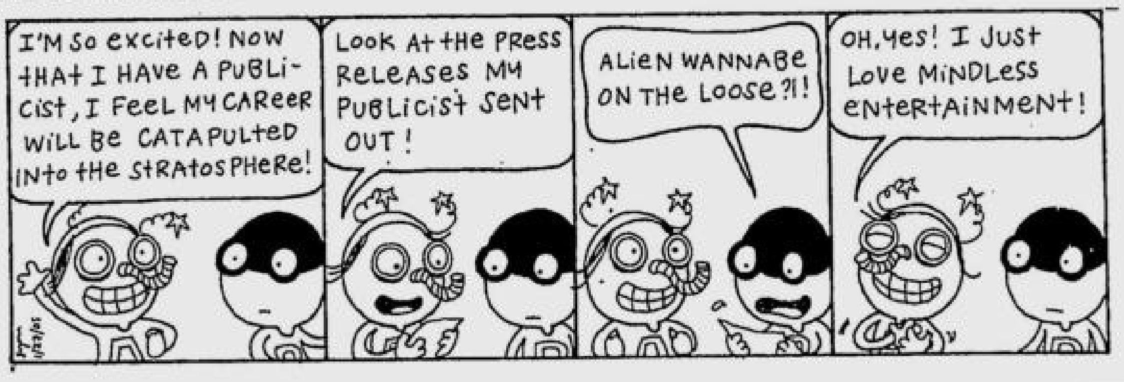
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


Baby Blues Classics
BATH TIME, GUYS!
WE DON'T NEED A BATH!
YES YOU DO... COME ON...
NO BATH! NO BATH! NO BATH!
WE WOULD'VE WON THAT ARGUMENT IF SOMEBODY WASN'T CARRYING HALF THE SANDBOX IN HIS PULL-UPS.
SORRWY.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M So excited! Now that I HAVE A PUBLICist, I FeeL MY CAReeR WiLL Be CATAPULTED INto the StRAtosPHeRe!
Look At the PRess Releases MY PUBLicist Sent OUT!
ALieN WANNABe ON THe Loose?!!
OH, Yes! I Just Love MiNDLess eNteRtAiNMeNt!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: At times, you have moments of genius. You're bright, clever, quick and childlike. You often show your talents at an early age. You love to keep abreast of what is new. You value your precious freedom. You're enthusiastic, youthful and energetic. This year might be one of the most powerful years of your life. **Birthdate of:** Bobby "Blue" Bland, singer/songwriter; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, composer; Lewis Carroll, author (Alice in Wonderland).

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Relationships with parents and authority figures are a bit strained . It's as if neither party wants to be cooperative. It's always easier to get along, isn't it?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be frugal and careful about travel plans today. Double-check everything. Take nothing for granted. Publishing and educational matters also need your careful scrutiny.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A poor day to ask anyone to lend you cash or to give you anything. The universe is a bit tightfisted. If you don't expect anything, you won't be disappointed.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Relationships with loved ones are rather cool and stilted. Communication does not flow easily. Therefore, don't expect too much. Relax.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You're best off working alone today. Wait till another day to suggest new ideas to co-workers. Others are not trusting or friendly today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Romance might disappoint you in some way today. But the road to love is never smooth. In fact, the road to anything is never smooth. That's life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might be disappointed that something you wanted to buy to make your home more beautiful is either too expensive or impossible to get. Perhaps you have to be more realistic.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The moods of people fluctuate, just like the weather. Don't take it personally if people are aloof or if they seem unfriendly. It's a passing thing.

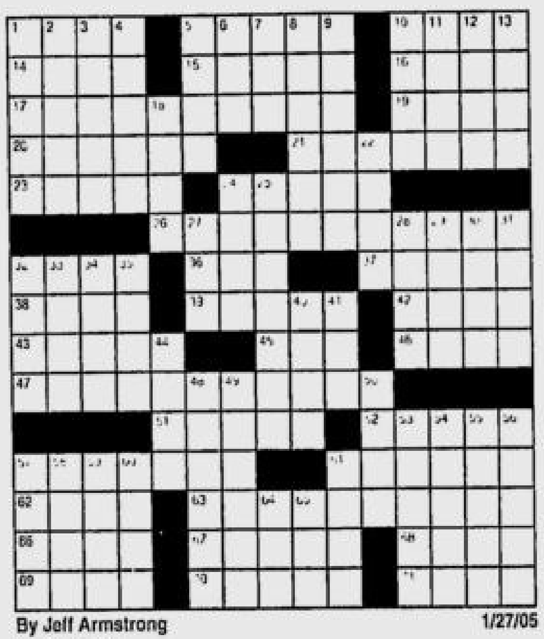
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your approach to money should be quite serious today. This is not a day for impulse shopping or frivolous purchases. If you want to buy something, buy something practical that will last a long time.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't worry about what others think. The fact is that you are a perfectionist. Perfection is impossible. Be kinder to yourself.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Time spent alone today will give you an opportunity to learn something important. Sometimes solitude is the source of new understanding. It's as if ideas were cooking on the back burner.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't be disappointed in friends today. Ironically, someone might be disappointed in you. Misunderstandings between people who care about each other are such a waste of time.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Jeff Armstrong
Madison, WI

1/27/05

ACROSS
1 Singer McEntire
5 Perform
10 Part of a door frame
14 WWII powers
15 Turn signal
16 Hydrox rival
17 Start of Samuel Johnson quote
19 Close tightly
20 Loves
21 Captivate
23 Madrid mister
24 Dance in triple time
26 Part 2 of quote
32 Lettered sandwiches
36 Purulent skin eruptions
37 Tonsorial tool
38 Island do
39 Pseudonym
42 Verve
43 Actress Woodard
45 Center opening?
46 Table staple
47 Part 3 of quote
51 Dad of Beau Bridges
52 Battery terminal
57 Discussions
61 Weds on the wing
62 Lipinski jump
63 End of quote
66 Bone-dry
67 Zaps
68 Cleveland's lake
69 Kentucky fort
70 Dizzying designs
71 Lord's lady

DOWN
1 Indian princes
2 Ooze
3 American buffalo
4 "The Jetsons" dog
5 Corn units
6 FDR's Blue Eagle
7 "Exodus" hero
8 Sportscaster Howard
9 Jackson's note
10 Kid
11 Vicinity
12 Signify
13 Take off
18 Gilpin of "Frasier"
22 Russian ruler, once
24 Knitting yarn
25 Apprehension
27 Hot spring
28 Blots
29 Poet Pound
30 Seethe
31 Jogging pace
32 Spill the beans
33 Lollapalooza
34 Wilson's predecessor
35 Browse the web
40 Copied
41 Knightly address
44 Fitzgerald of jazz
48 Unpigmented
49 Even chance
50 New Haven campus
53 Nuzzled
54 Musical drama
55 Jeans material
56 First name in cosmetics
57 Vintner's barrel
58 Yoked pair
59 Fictional sleuth Wolfe
60 Bend
61 Loader for a while?
64 Alias acronym
65 For each

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

Z	I	T	I	■	A	T	A	R	I	■	G	A	L	L
A	R	A	L	■	F	A	S	T	S	■	O	L	I	O
P	I	C	K	O	F	T	H	E	L	I	T	T	E	R
S	S	T	■	C	I	T	E	■	■	R	H	O	N	E
■	■	■	V	E	R	O	■	S	A	K	I	■	■	■
■	C	R	E	A	M	O	F	T	H	E	C	R	O	P
S	H	E	E	N	■	■	R	E	E	D	■	U	M	A
H	I	T	S	■	P	R	I	S	M	■	I	B	A	R
A	L	A	■	A	L	I	S	■	■	P	A	I	R	S
H	I	G	H	M	U	C	K	A	M	U	C	K	S	■
■	■	■	E	A	S	F	■	R	E	N	O	■	■	■
S	A	D	A	T	■	■	E	S	A	I	■	S	O	U
P	R	I	V	I	L	E	G	E	D	C	L	A	S	S
A	C	R	E	■	S	E	G	N	O	■	E	L	S	E
T	S	K	S	■	U	N	S	E	W	■	S	E	A	R

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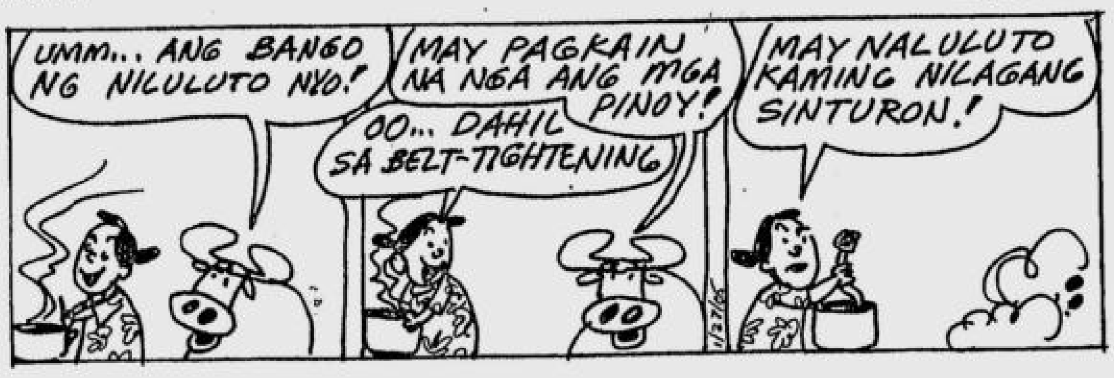
1/27/05

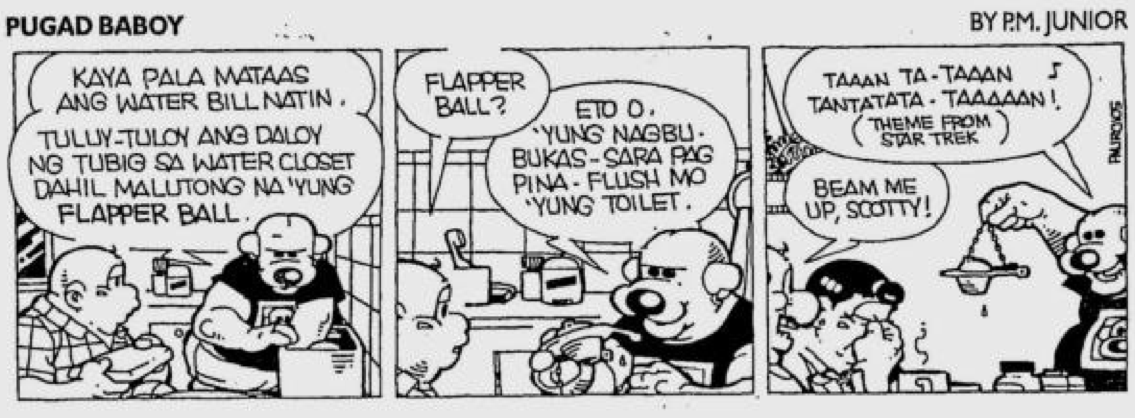
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


UMM... ANG BANGO NG NILULUTO NYO!
MAY PAGKAIN NA NGA ANG MGA PINOY!
OO... DAHIL SA BELT-TIGHTENING
MAY NALULUTO KAMING NILAGANG SINTURON!

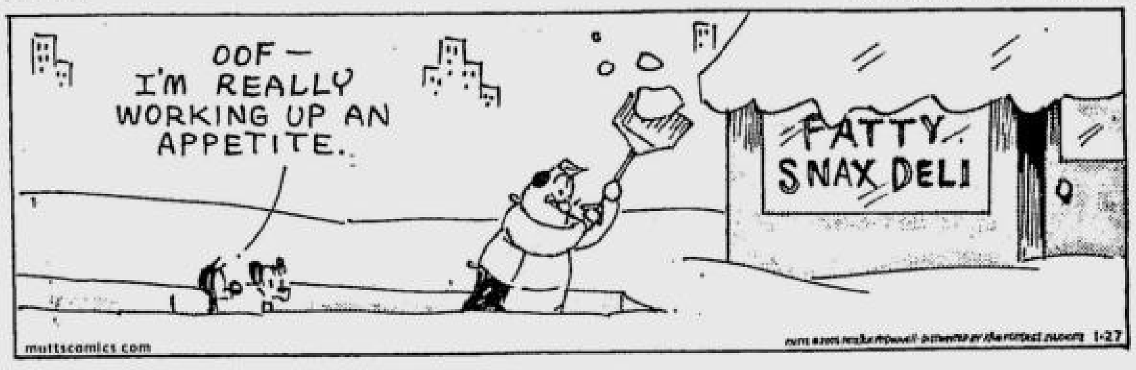
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


KAYA PALA MATAAS ANG WATER BILL NATIN.
TULUY-TULOY ANG DALOY NG TUBIG SA WATER CLOSET DAHIL MALUTONG NA 'YUNG FLAPPER BALL.
FLAPPER BALL?
ETO O. 'YUNG NAGBUBUKAS-SARA PAG PINA-FLUSH MO 'YUNG TOILET.
TAAAN TA-TAAAN TANTATATA-TAAAAAN! (THEME FROM STAR TREK)
BEAM ME UP, SCOTTY!

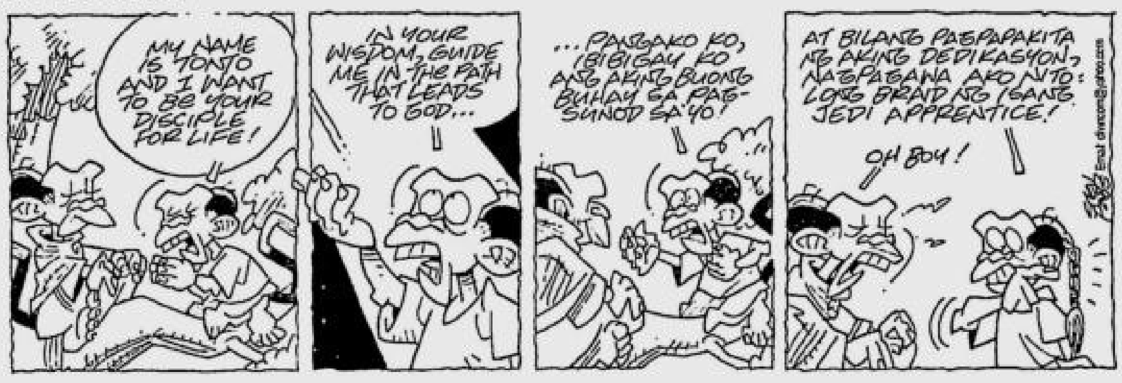
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OOF — I'M REALLY WORKING UP AN APPETITE.
FATTY SNAX DELI
muttscomics.com

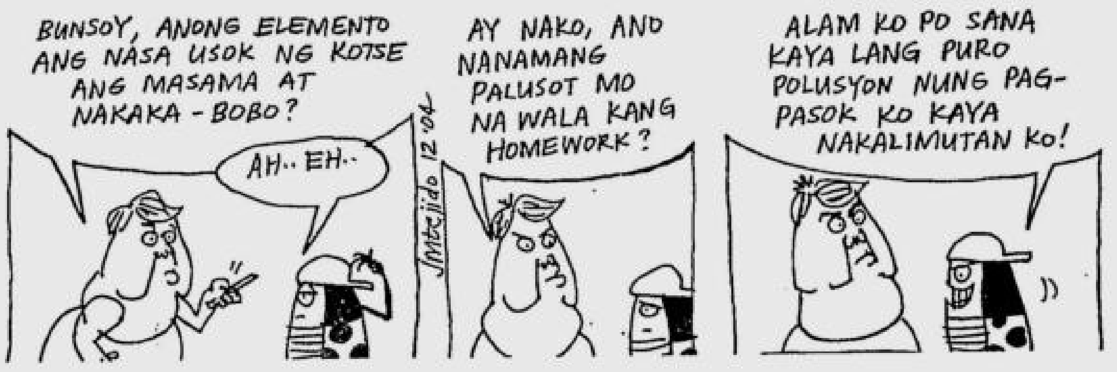
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MY NAME IS TONJO AND I WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE FOR LIFE!
IN YOUR WISDOM, GUIDE ME IN THE PATH THAT LEADS TO GOD...
...PANGAKO KO, IBIBIGAY KO ANG AKING BUONG BUHAY SA PAGSUNOD SA'YO!
AT BILANG PAGPAPAKITA NG AKING DEDIKASYON, NAGPAGAWA AKO NITO: LONG BRAID NG ISANG JEDI APPRENTICE!
OH BOY!

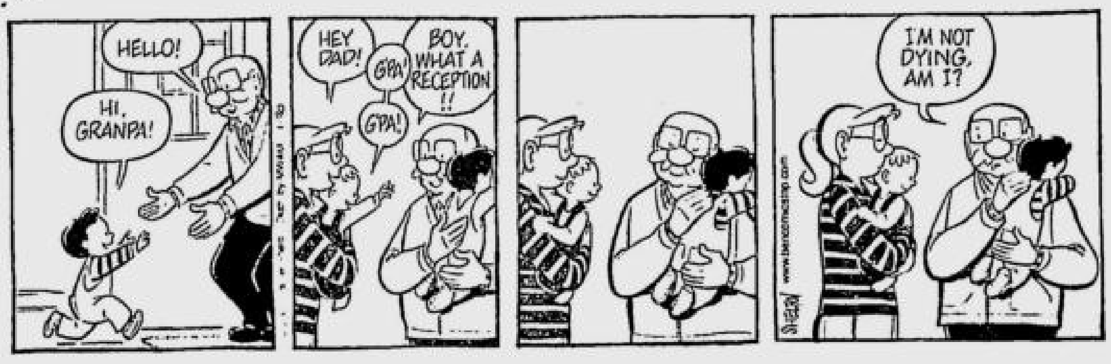
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, ANONG ELEMENTO ANG NASA USOK NG KOTSE ANG MASAMA AT NAKAKA-BOBO?
AH.. EH..
AY NAKO, ANO NANAMANG PALUSOT MO NA WALA KANG HOMEWORK?
ALAM KO PO SANA KAYA LANG PURO POLUSYON NUNG PAGPASOK KO KAYA NAKALIMUTAN KO!

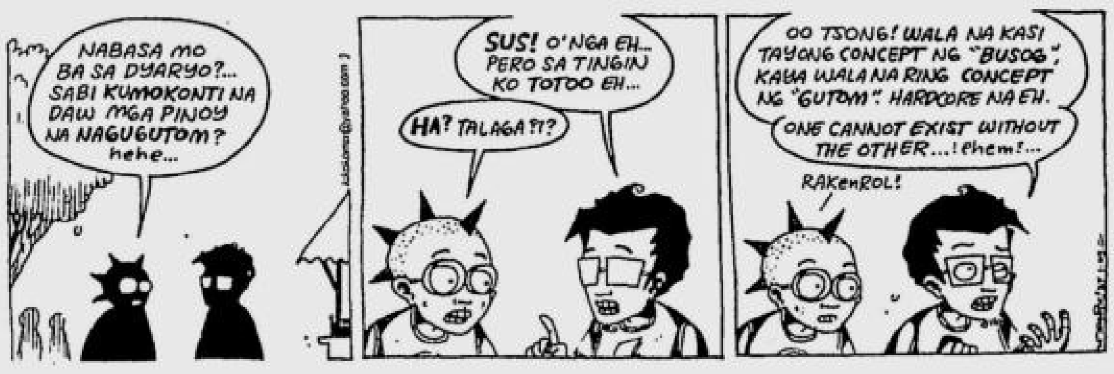
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HELLO!
HI, GRANPA!
HEY DAD!
GPA!
BOY, WHAT A RECEPTION !!
GPA!
I'M NOT DYING, AM I?

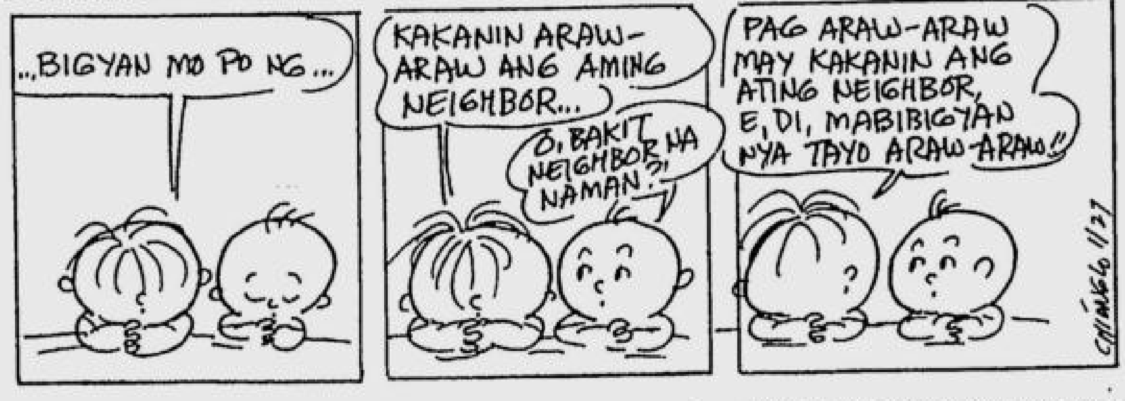
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NABASA MO BA SA DYARYO?... SABI KUMOKONTI NA DAW MGA PINOY NA NAGUGUTOM? hehe...
HA? TALAGA?!?
SUS! O'NGA EH.. PERO SA TINGIN KO TOTOO EH...
OO TSONG! WALA NA KASI TAYONG CONCEPT NG "BUSOG", KAYA WALA NA RING CONCEPT NG "GUTOM". HARDCORE NA EH.
ONE CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE OTHER...!ehem!...
RAKenROL!

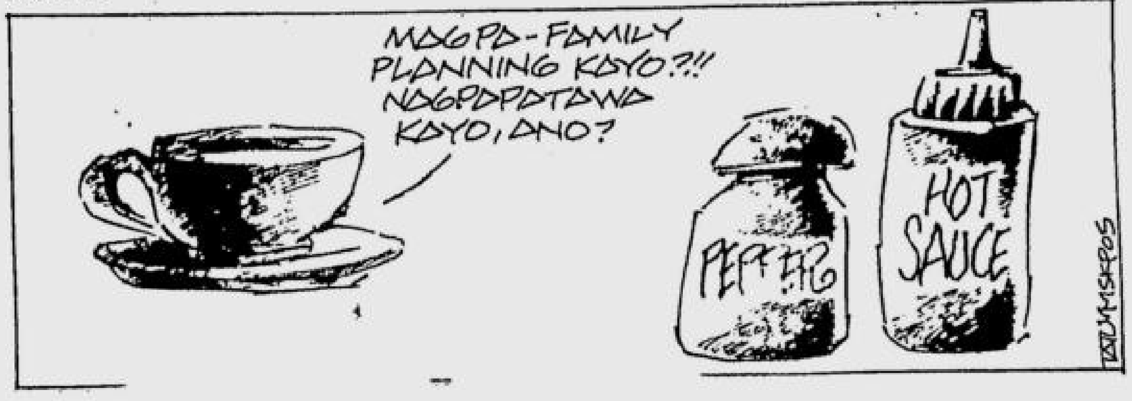
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


...BIGYAN MO PO NG...
KAKANIN ARAW-ARAW ANG AMING NEIGHBOR...
O, BAKIT NEIGHBOR NA NAMAN?!
PAG ARAW-ARAW MAY KAKANIN ANG ATING NEIGHBOR, E, DI, MABIBIGYAN NYA TAYO ARAW-ARAW!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MAGPA-FAMILY PLANNING KAYO?!! NAGPAPATAWA KAYO, ANO?
PEPPER
HOT SAUCE

Truth and consequence of pre-need plan

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

TAKE this advice from Mary Ann Duque of the PDI Saturday Special staff if you're planning to buy a pre-need memorial plan.

She says find out first what benefits you will get and don't just rely on the words of the salesperson. Read everything including the smallest prints in the contract before signing.

She learned this lesson the hard way. Mary Ann admitted her mistake in presuming that the value of the memorial plan she bought from Loyola would cover major burial expenses. It was a costly mistake, she realized too late.

It was only when her mother died in September that Mary Ann discovered that by assigning the plan to her parent, she could only use half of the P60,000 she had fully paid, with an additional P5,000 which the full amount had earned in (bonus) interest.

She said "the amount (P35,000) couldn't buy a decent enough coffin priced P100,000 at least." In addition, she was asked to pay an additional service fee for straightening her mother's bent knees so they would fit the coffin.

To cap it all, only one hearse that had seen better days was assigned to them during the interment rites. They had expected another vehicle to bring the flowers.

When her father also passed away a week later, her family decided to just pay for the services to avoid the hassles of using another memorial plan.

But that didn't end her grief. She explained, "I was so disappointed about (how the plan turned out) that I stopped paying last October the installment on the second memorial plan I (had) with Loyola. It was a P44,820 plan and I had already paid P26,145. I finally told Loyola recently that I had decided to cancel the plan."

Before she could cancel the plan, however, she was told to pay the unpaid installment for three months, then wait for at least two weeks before filing the formal application and hope it would be approved. And the full refund she could expect would only be P11,952, if and when she got it.

Mary Ann concluded, "I advise your readers to go over and read the policy of the memorial plan they are buying. And for holders of old plans, they can save themselves a lot of problem by inquiring from the pre-need company if the value of their plan is still suitable to today's situation, considering how expensive services have become. They can avoid the agony and the tension that I and my family experienced."

Cell phone scam prevalent

Despite repeated warnings from the consumer protection bureau of the Department of Trade and Industry, people still fall prey to scams perpetuated through cellular phones. A lady horticulturist we know related how she lost last Saturday a total of P9,000 representing 30 pre-paid cards at P300 each in a scam.

She received a text message that her number won a high-end Nokia cell phone from Smart. When she called up the number she was told that, to claim the prize, she had to send the phone cards before noon.

As soon as she had sent them, she was to go to the Smart office in Rufino Building, Makati and look for the message sender. But when she got to Smart and called the sender to ask where she should go to see him, he replied, "Joke, joke, joke!"

Paging Smart

A lady e-mail sender wants to know why it's taking Smart Communications so long to award the prize her husband won last October in Baguio City. She wrote that he won a Nokia phone with camera from Smart at a golf tournament in Baguio City.

"My husband received a letter from branch manager Noel Moratal who told him to claim the prize last Nov. 2... Up to now, however, he has not been able to claim his prize. Every time he went there to collect it, he was given the run-around by (the staff).

"I wrote to Smart company at the e-mail address I downloaded from the Internet but nobody replied. It's a big hassle going back and forth. I hope that for all the inconvenience and vexations they have caused, Smart would give us a higher-end Nokia model."

We sent a copy of the complaint to Smart customer service. A spokesperson promised to look into the complaint of the e-mail sender.

Cell phone billing

Another e-mail sender, lindab@wave.com.ph, would like to share her observation about mobile phone billing.

"I just got a new plan and, after one month of use, my phone log showed that the calls I made—that is, dialed from my phone—totaled a little over 29 minutes for one whole month. That covered calls that did not get through because the line was busy, the other party did not answer or I decided to cancel the call before it was answered. The 'unproductive' calls lasted no more than a few seconds.

"It seems, however, that cell phone companies round off everything to one minute. Moreover, it appears you get billed whether or not your call went through. My first bill, which covered only the first two weeks of use, charged me for 29 minutes of calls, my total for one month.

"It appears that those who think they are saving money by making so-called 'missed calls' (dialing a number then disconnecting expecting the other party to call back), may be better off completing the call and using up at least a full minute. They will be charged for it anyway."

Send letters to the columnist at mariettagiron@hotmail.com.

Cooking for health classes

EVA Rose Pua of DeliFresh Food Organic Restaurant is conducting classes on the "Food Laws of Healthy Eating Practices."

Learn to combine food to maintain and sustain your weight for life and the method and techniques of cooking. The class will teach how to prepare and cook organic food to help cure sickness.

Only 12 participants will be accepted in each class. Fee is P7,000 per person.

Schedule of classes: Feb. 8-10, 2-5 p.m.; Feb. 22-24, 2-5 p.m.; March 15-17, April 5-7, and April 19-21.

Delifresh is at Unit 101 G/F, Carpark Bldg., Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Edsa, Mandaluyong City. Call 6388358.

Your bread and butter (pudding)

From page C1

these days, internationally even. It always makes me happy to use ingredients that are readily available to us. Here are four simple ways of enjoying *tilapia* and, by the way, you can substitute fillets of *lapu-lapu*, sole (*dapa*), flounder (*lapad*), snapper (*maya-maya*), parrot (loro) for *tilapia*. Buy live *tilapia* whenever possible, anyway they're not difficult to find. All recipes are good for approximately 1/2 kilo of *tilapia* fillets.

In Stewed Tomatoes

tilapia fillets
3 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
1 can of whole tomatoes, chopped (Cirio/Molinera)
2 tsps of tomato paste
½ c water
¼ c parsley, chopped
¼ c dill, chopped
¼ c basil
pepper, to taste

Combine ingredients in a saucepan, except *tilapia*, and simmer over low heat for 15 minutes. Add *tilapia* and cook until done.

In Caper Butter

tilapia fillets
salt
pepper
flour
butter for frying

Season *tilapia* with salt and pepper. Dredge in flour and pan-fry in butter.

¼ c butter
2 tbsp olive oil
1 c garlic, sliced
¼ c parsley
1 tbsp anchovy
1 tbsp capers
pepper or chili flakes/chili powder to taste
salt and pepper, to taste
2 tsp lemon juice

Melt butter in a saucepan. Add olive oil and the rest of the ingredients. Pour sauce over fish. Serve immediately.

Asian Style

tilapia fillets
3 tbsp shiao sing or rice wine
3 tbsp light soy sauce
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 tsp fresh ginger root, finely slivered
1 small clove garlic, minced
2 tsp sugar or to taste
2 tsp cornstarch & 2 tsp water
1/3 c green onion, sliced diagonally
1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
cilantro sprigs

Marinate *tilapia* in shiao sing, soy, sesame oil and ginger for 30 minutes. Bring water of steamer to a boil and leave on running boil for five minutes before steaming fish. Steam for eight minutes.

Save sauce from steamed fish and pour in saucepan. Combine cornstarch water and thicken sauce over heat. Season sauce with salt, pepper and sugar to taste. Pour over steamed fish and top with green onions and sesame seed. Garnish with cilantro.

In Shrimp Paste

4 tbsp oil
2 tbsp chopped garlic
1/3 c chopped shallots
1/3 c chopped tomatoes
2 tsp Thai shrimp paste
tilapia fillets
2 tsp *kalamansi* juice
fish sauce and pepper to taste

In a saucepan, add oil. Sauté the rest of the ingredients except fish. Cook until tomatoes are soft. Add *tilapia* and cook until done. Season to taste.

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

Gourmet Classes with Chef Dennis Hipolito
#137 9th Street corner Balete Drive, New Manila, Quezon City
About Chef Dennis: Dean's List graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY/Food Stylist/* Owner of Joconde Cakes/* Took over classes from the Famed Gourmet, Maur Aquino Lichauco in New Manila/*Trained under the tutelage of World Pastry Cup Champion En-Ming Hsu of the Ritz Carlton Chicago (a Four Seasons Hotel), Dan Budd of Park Avenue Café Chicago, Cake Stylist- Betty Van Norstrand, Food Stylist-Delores Custer and other instructors in the Philippines
February 5, 2005: CHEESECAKES 4 (Another Set of Delectable Cheesecakes) NEW CLASS Raspberry and White Chocolate Truffle Cheesecake, Caramel Ripple Maple Cheesecake, Irresistible Cherry Cheesecake, New York Style Cheesecake, Tangerine Cheesecake in a Filo Crust-P1850
February 12, 2005: CHOCOLATE INDULGENCE 2 (Simply Decadent! Perfect for Valentines) NEW CLASS Chocolate Sans Rival, Chocolate Cream Puffs, Chocolate Grand Marnier Loaf, Modified German Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Ecstasy Torte-P1600 (Callebaut Chocolates are Used in the Class)
February 19, 2005: SWEET MUNCHIES (Irresistible Treats for Family Gatherings) NEW CLASS Decadent Brownies with Chestnuts, Cream Cheese Swirled Coffeecake, Whole Wheat Date Nut Muffins, White Chocolate Pecan Pie, Chocolate Bailey's Shortbread Cookies-P1600
February 26, 2005: YEASTED BREADS 4 (More Yummy Breads) NEW CLASS Pesto Bread, Pineapple Walnut Bread, Braided Bagel Bread, Italian Cheese and Potato Bread, Buttery Hot Cross Buns, -P1600
*CLASSES ARE: 1:00PM-4:30PM, (Limited Seats Available)
*Classes Include: Ingredients, Recipe Hand Outs, and Product Shares.*For Inquiries and Reservations: **Please call or text 0917-8486656 or email us at gourmetpastry@aol.com.** LOOK for **GIRARD or YVETTE.**

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FEBRUARY - MARCH SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

BAKING CLASSES

February 2 - 4, Wed to Fri. - BASIC BAKING WORKSHOP. A 3-days hands-on workshop that will teach the students all the necessary principle and techniques in baking which will start with cookies, bars, coffee cakes and end with the three (3) main types of cakes. The workshop is limited to 15 students. Manual, ingredients and apron will be included for P4,300.00 from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 11, Fri. - BREADS. Bread recipes from our Pastry and Cake Decorator Chef, Chef Ana Baluyot, recipes include Ensaimada, Pan de Sal, Banana Loaf, French Bread Roll, Cheese Cupcake and Pan de Limon from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. including all ingredients for P1,200.00.
February 22, Tuesday - SIMPLE CAKES. An array of appetizing cakes for everyone to savour. Chef Junjun teaches Coffee Crumb Cake, Easy Chocolate Cake, Cocoa Banana Loaf, Yoghurt Cake with Mango Sauce and Apple Sauce Cake for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.
February 23, Wednesday - ANNA'S PIES. Different kinds of pies from our Pastry and Cake Decorator Chef, Chef Ana Baluyut will be demonstrated. The recipes are 2 Kinds of Apple Pie, Banana Cream Pie, Choco Cream Pie, Key Lime Pie and Strawberry Pie and P1,200.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.
March 01, Tuesday - COOKIES GALORE. A collection of new recipes for all cookie lovers from Chef Junjun de Guzman, let's all do: Cashew Fudge Cookies, Crunch Cookies, Oatmeal Choco Chip Cookies, Graham Pecan Cookie and Cardamom Almond Cookies for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.
March 03, Thursday - COFFEESHOP DESSERTS. Have the coffee but nothing to go with it, here are common desserts found in cafes for you to learn from Chef Junjun de Guzman: Crème Brulee, Carrot Cake, Turtle Pie, NY Cheesecake and Chocolate Chip Muffins for P1,200 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

COOKING CLASSES

January 31, Mon. - COOKING WITH GATA. New recipes from Chef David Fajardo will be demonstrated to us that can be served to our family and friends. The recipes are Kohol sa Gata, Ginataang Tilo, Chicken with Gata, Sinaing na Isda sa Gata at Ginataang Puso ng Saging. P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.
February 01, Tuesday - SIMPLE SUSHI & SASHIMI WORKSHOP 2. You will learn from Chef Rikachi Aoki of Osaka, Japan How to Trim Flat Fish, How to make Aji Sushi, Futomaki Rainbow, Maki Inari Sushi, See Chicken Maki, Tamago Yaki and Nigiri Sushi. Recipes include ingredients for P1,000.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 05, Saturday - SEAFOOD FUSION. Exciting east-west seafood dishes originally created by Chef Gene Gonzalez for special dinners that are memorable to palate and pocket like Lapu-lapu in Spicy Cracker Nut Garlic Sauce, Prawns in Shrimp Essence and Light Curry Sauce with Mango, Shrimps on Toast with Mango Salsa and Roasted Seabass with Five-Spice Butter and Fried Leeks. For P1,000.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.
February 06, Sunday - ALL ABOUT SATE. Chef Gene brings out his authentic Indonesian and Malaccan family recipes from study trips and teaches you how to prepare the different spice pasts for sate, the sauce and the Nasi Lemak and the authentic Nasi Goreng. Recipes include all ingredients for P1,200.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
February 07, Monday - MODERN AND EASY PASTA SAUCES 2. The Sequel to Chef Junjun's class —— now he will do simple sauces made with extraordinary ingredients - definitely a palate enhancer. Let's see him demonstrate Chicken and Chorizo Lasagne, Fettuccine with Shrimp Pesto, Smoked Salmon Linguine, Pasta alla Rustica, Ziti with Beef Short Ribs and Oga's Pasta Salad for P1,200.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 08, Tuesday - A JAPANESE MEAL 1. Recipes include Sukiyaki, Shabu-shabu, Miso Soup, Nimono and Gindara Teriyaki from Chef Aoki including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. for P1,000.00.
February 09, Wednesday - GREAT TASTING SALADS 2. New salads for everyone to enjoy from Chef Junjun Recipes include Mexican Taco Mix, Shrimp and Mandarin Orange Salad, Pear and Goat Cheese Composee, Classic Waldorf, Tomato and Mozzarella, Tasty Creamy Carbonara Salad. This class will include different salad dressings to accompany your own mix of lettuce greens. For P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 10, Thurs. - SUMPTUOUS SALMON 1. Let Chef Gino teach you 6 unique and tasty ways to cook Salmon that can be used in catering or for entertaining. Recipes include Salmon Cannelloni, Salmon Croquettes with Dill-Mustard Sauce, Herb Crusted Salmon Fillet with Caper Buerre Blanc, Spinach Salmon Lasagna with Saffron Gratin, Salmon Mousse with Fish Roe in Horseradish Sauce and Poached Salmon Paupiette with Lemon-Basil Whisk Butter Sauce for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 12, Saturday - PINOY KAKANIN 1. Pinoy Kakanin recipes from Chef David such as Pichi-piching Kamoteng Kahoy, Pichi-piching Green Pinipig, Sapin-sapin, Puto, Puto (Flour) and Kalamay na Kalabasa for P1,000.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. including all ingredients.
February 13, Sunday - FUN WITH FISH. New sets of recipes from Chef Gene Gonzalez that you'll surely enjoy eating like West Lake Fish, Piquant Steamed Fish, Steamed Fish with Ham & Mushroom, Sweet-Sour Thai Chiu Chow Style, Indian Fish Curry and Yunnan Fish Casserole. Recipes include all ingredients for P1,200.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
February 16, Wednesday - GOURMET DISHES FOR THE LENTEN SEASON. New set of recipes that can be cooked this Lenten Season from Bettina Legarda of Gourmet's Palate. The recipes are Seafood Newburg, Lemon Shrimps with Egg Noodles, Crab Stuffed Tomatoes, Chilled Seafood Party Antipasto, Grilled Fish with Walnut Butter Sauce and Fantastic California Cioppino for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.
February 17, Thursday - SIMPLE AND EASY FISH DISHES. Simple and easy fish dishes from Chef David such as Assam Curried Pampano, Sizzling Bangus Nuggets, Sisig, Kinilaw na Likod ng Bangus, Fish Meuniere with Hazelnut Butter, Smoked Tilapia Tom Yam, Steamed Apahap Fillet with Chinese Ham and Mushrooms and Fish Teriyaki from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,000.00 including all ingredients.
February 18, Friday - CHINESE DIMSUMS. Our Chinese Pastry and Cake-Decorator Chef, Ana Baluyut will share with us her family-own recipes of assorted dumplings like Siomai and other famous Chinese dimsums. The recipes are Eight Treasure Spring Rolls, Sweet Peanut Soup, Sesame Chicken Roll-ups, Pork Siomai, Shrimp Dumpling, Quail Eggs Siomai and Beef Siomai include all ingredients for P1,200.00 from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 19, Saturday - DAVE'S SUNDAY CURRIES. Assorted curries with all the fixins for a grand meal from Chef David Fajardo will be demonstrated. The recipes are Chicken Curry, Lamb Curry, Fruit Curry, Fish Curry Pork and Potato Curry. The recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,200.00.
February 20, Sunday - SEAFOOD FUSION 2. Another set of Delicious Seafood dishes from Chef Gene, recipes are Smoked Salmon Dumplings, Squid Cake, Spicy Tuna Carpaccio, Timbale of Salmon with Smoked Fish and Shrimp Spring Rolls with Red Pepper Bean Paste. P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
February 21, Monday - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 1. Learn delicious Vietnamese Cuisine from Nga Nguyen de Lemos, owner of Vietnamese Food House. Recipes include Pho Bo (Beef Noodle Soup), Goi Cuon (Fresh Springrolls with Shrimp and Pork), Pho Ap Chao (Fried Rice Stick noodles with Squid and Shrimps), Cha Ca Thang Long (Grilled Fish with Dill), Goi Rau Muong Thit Bo (Swamp Cabbage with Sautéed Beef Salad) and Che Bap (Sweet Corn with Coconut Milk) for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 24, Thursday - SUMPTUOUS SALMON 2. Let Chef Gino teach you 6 unique and tasty ways to cooking Salmon that can be used in catering or for simple entertaining. Recipes include Salmon Head Red Curry with Coconut Milk, Salmon Teriyaki with Wasabi Mayonnaise, Salmon Meuniere with Kani Sanda Gratin, Salmon Cheesecake, Coulibiac of Salmon, Smoked Salmon with Shrimp Dumpling for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 25, Friday - EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 2. The second time around for Chef Junjun this time sharing his old homestyle chicken dishes. Chicken Adobo with Kamatis, Spanish Chicken Rice, Chicken in Seven-up, Salpicon, Italian Chicken Stew and Chicken Liver Pate for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.
February 26, Sat - DAVE'S SPECIAL BAGOONG CLASS. Binagoongang Baboy, Sambal Pork and Gulay Luto sa Bagoong are just some of the recipes that Chef David Fajardo will be teaching us in this lifestyle class. Recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. for P1,200.00. NEW CLASS.
February 27, Sun. - PRAWNS TO PLEASE. Chef Gene will teach us different styles of cooking prawns that you will enjoy. Recipes include Prawns Furai, Prawns Benihana, Sizzling Crystal Prawns in Chinese Bagoong, Prawns in Orange Sauce, Prawns in Tamarind Sauce (Crustacean Style) and Prawns in Caramelized Walnuts for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
February 28, Monday - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 2. A sequel to Chef Nga Nguyen de Lemos Vietnam cuisine for you to enjoy, the recipes are Cha Gio Tom (Fried Springroll with Shrimps), Goi Buoi Hai Sang (Pomelo Salad with Jellyfish), Ca Kho To (Caramelized Fish in Hot Pot), Banh Xeo (Vietnamese Omelette), Pho Xao Bo (Sauteed Hofan with Beef and Kailan Leaves) and Cha Dau Xanh (Yellow Beans with Coconut Milk) for P1,200.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.
March 02, Wednesday - PASTA IN A FLASH. Let Chef Gino teach you 8 quick, easy and delightful pasta recipes in one short period. Recipes include Pasta Fritata, Linguine in Vongole Sauce, Chorizo, Mushrooms and Roasted Red Bell Pepper Sauce, Chicken and Shrimp Lemon Crème Sauce, Pasta Bianca alla Carbonara, Pasta Salad with Honey Dill Dressing and Gino's Puttanesca for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
March 04, Friday - PASTA IN A FLASH 2. Another 8 quick, easy and delightful pasta recipes in one short period. Recipes include Penne with Cambozola Sauce, Roasted Walnut Gorgonzola Sauce, Truffle Scented Liver Sauce, Seafood with Hazelnut Butter Sauce, Scallop and Shrimp Saffron Sauce, Chorizo and Chicken Tomato Cream, Mushroom Pancetta in Olive oil, Chicken and Shrimp Pesto are recipes from Chef Gino. For P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD CALL AT LEAST TWO DAYS BEFORE THE CLASS FOR RESERVATION.

THE PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian cooking, wine appreciation and table service.

The program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare a Legacy buffet. The program has Internship or In-house Practicum for 250 hours and Externship or Outside Practicum for 200 hours. Enrollment includes 3 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used.
Classes will start on February 21. Enrollment is ongoing. For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn or Glady

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1. JAN 31 - FEB 04 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - MASTER COURSE IN CAKE DECORATING - P10,500. Learn the practical & easy method of making icing flowers, borders, scrolls & strings, cake designing, sugar molding, color flow, color technique, wedding cake assembly. NEXT SCHED : FEB 28 - MAR 03 '05
2. FEB 05 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - MUFFINS-MUFFINS - P3,000. Cinnamon- Crunch Sweet Potato, Onion & Shallots, Country Apple Sauce, Choco Chip, Carrot Nut, Banana Walnut Muffins. NEXT SCHED: MAR 05 '05
3. FEB 07 - 10 '05 //8:00AM - 5:00PM - ADVANCED GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD - P10,500. NEXT SCHED: MAR 07 - 10 '05
4. FEB 09 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - NEW METHOD ON FONDANT - P4,500. Using lace mats, New Rolling Pin w/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons,Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilling. NEXT SCHED: MAR 09 '05
5. FEB 12 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE BAKING 1 - P3,000 Banana, Apple Almond, Bars, Carrot Cake, Choco Nut Cake, Whole Wheat Bread, Raisin Bread NEXT SCHED: MAR 12 '05
6. // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING
P2,500 - FEB 14 - Cakes: all chiffons & chocolate chiffon cake, sponge cakes, butter cakes, mamon, crema de mango;
P2,500 - FEB 15 - Cakes & Roll: malacañang roll, chocolate roll, taisan, brownies, pineapple upside-down, custard cake.
P2,750 - FEB 16 - Breads: pan de sal, dinner rolls, buns, pan de coco, ensaymada, honey bread & white bread.
P2,500 - FEB 17 - Pies: Buko pie, custard pie, pineapple pie, apple pie, mango pie;
P2,750 - FEB 18 - Pastries & Cookies: caramel tart, almond tart, San Nicolas cookies, camachile, lengua de gato, coconut macaroons.
7. FEB 14 - 18 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - COLD PORCELAIN FLOWER COURSES WITH PORCELAIN RECIPE - P4,500. (Each set is lesson covered for one day) a) Sampaguita, Sunflower, Waling-waling; b) Rose, Catleya, Cymbidium; c) Magnolia, Gerbera, Lilies; d) Open Rose, Hydrangeas, Grapes, e) Mask or Maskara - a design of your choice. COLD PORCELAIN DOLLS FOR APPOINTMENT NEXT SCHED: MAR 14 - 18 '05
8. FEB 18 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC SWISS CHOCOLATE CANDY-MAKING TECHNIQUE - P3,500. Do the right tempering for Valentine give-aways, learn how to temper and make your own centers, like truffles, nougats, rocky road, fondant, ube, langka, mango. NEXT SCHED: MAR 18 '05
9. FEB 19 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - ADVANCED CHOCOLATE CANDY-MAKING - P3,500. Learn how to temper, make your fre-hand chocolate roses, and hollow centers. NEXT SCHED: MAR 19 '05
10. FEB 21 - 25 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:30PM - SPECIAL BAKING - P13,500. Learn to make 30 Kinds of special cakes from around the world. Each cake has a different icing & decoration. NEXT SCHED: MAR 28 - APR 01 '05
11. FEB 26 '05 // 8:00AM - 12:00NN - SUGAR FREE 2 - P3,000. Brownie Supreme, Choco Chiffon, Orange Chiffon, Banana Pecan, Cookies, Spiced Raisin Cookies, Chewy Golden Cookies, Baking for Diabetics. NEXT SCHED: APR 02 '05
12. FEB 18 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - TAPAS - P3,000. Spanish Omolette, Fish Pastries, Potato & Ham Croquettes, Pescado Frito, Albondigas, Ensalada de Pollo & Mallorcan Pizza. NEXT SCHED: MAR 18 '05
13. FEB 25 '05 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - EDIBLE GELATIN FLOWERS W/O SUGAR - P2,000. NEXT SCHED: APR 01 '05

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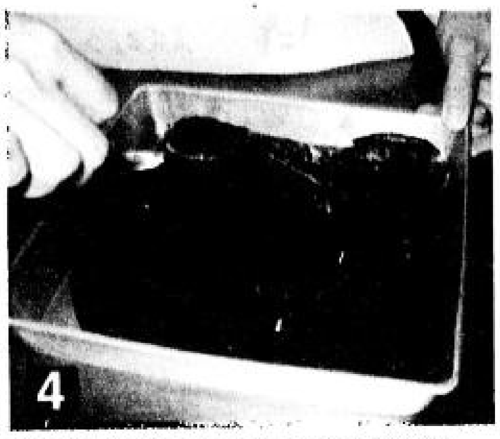
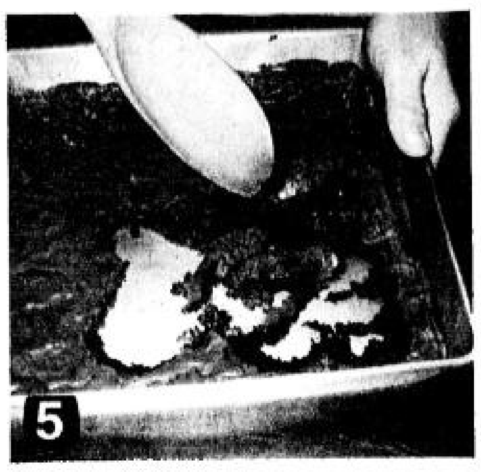


POUR into prepared pan. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out with a few moist crumbs. Cool for a few minutes.



BREAK cooled brownies into crumbs.

TRANSFER to a mixing bowl and add sugar, nuts and cocoa powder. Blend well. Add syrup and rum. If you want a more intense flavor, add 4 tbsp rum. Mix thoroughly.

SHAPE into small balls and chill for 10 minutes.

Decadent, spirit-ed dessert

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

CHOCOLATE Rum Balls may be traditional holiday favorites, but that does not mean you cannot have them anytime of the year.

A box of them will make a wonderful gift that will be most welcome regardless of season by family and friends.

The following recipe will give you rum balls that are especially good and easy to prepare and assemble. The rum in this chocolate dessert gives a pure, sweet, slightly caramel flavor that stays on the tongue.

Imee Borres, Maya Food demonstrator and kitchen researcher of The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center, Liberty Commodities Corporation (tel. 8925011 loc. 108), demonstrates the simple way to prepare this dessert.

"This recipe has two phases: you first bake the brownies and then you make the rum balls from the crushed brownies," says Borres.

Wash your hands thoroughly before you begin because you have to hold the chocolate mixture in your palm to shape it into a ball. As the rum balls are very rich, make very small balls.

To coat the ball with chocolate, drop a piece into the chocolate mixture. Use a small fork to roll the ball around, coating all sides. Using a small fork on each side of the rum ball (just to hold it up—do not pierce the ball with the forks), remove the ball from the chocolate mixture and gently shake it above the chocolate for about five seconds to eliminate the excess.

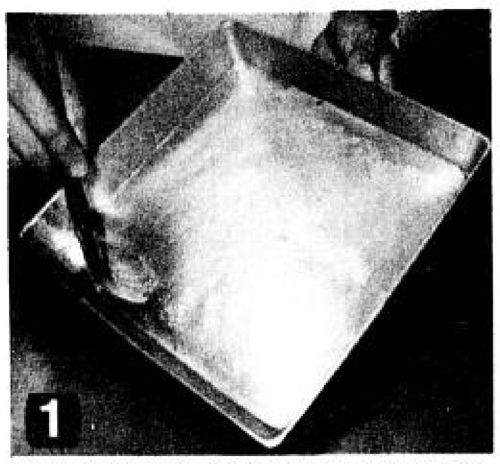
Quickly place the ball in a paper cup or on an ungreased cookie sheet. Refrigerate the balls until the chocolate sets, at least 30-60 minutes. Allow to sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving although it is best to age the balls for a few days before serving.

Ingredients

1 500g pack Maya Decadence Fudge Brownie Mix
3 tbsp water
1/3 c melted butter or vegetable oil
2 whole eggs
1 chocolate bar, cut into pieces
1 c confectioner's sugar, sifted
1 c cashew nuts, crushed
2 tbsp cocoa powder
1 1/2-2 tbsp corn syrup
2 tbsp rum
2 c semi-sweet chocolate
melted white chocolate/candy sprinkles or chopped nuts

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

STEP BY STEP

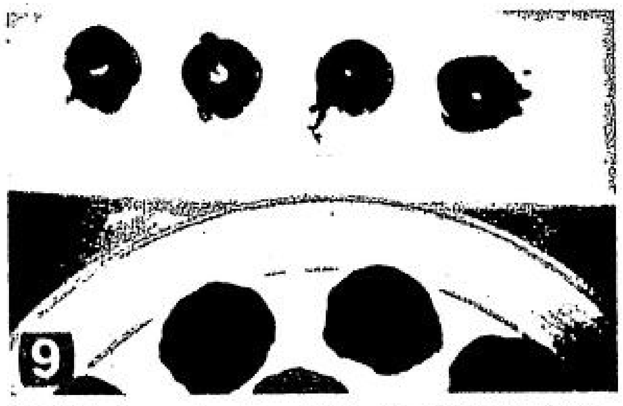


PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Grease bottom of a 9"x9" square pan with shortening. Set aside.

IN A MIXING bowl, combine brownie mix, water, oil and eggs. Beat with a wooden spoon until well blended.

STIR in chocolate bits. Mix well.

MEANWHILE, melt chocolate in a double boiler or in a microwave oven for at least 20 seconds. Dip chilled rum balls in melted chocolate coating completely.



PLACE balls on a lined tray. Chill until set. Top rum balls with white chocolate, nuts or candy sprinkles and place in paper cups.

DECADENT Chocolate Rum Balls

Seafood temptations

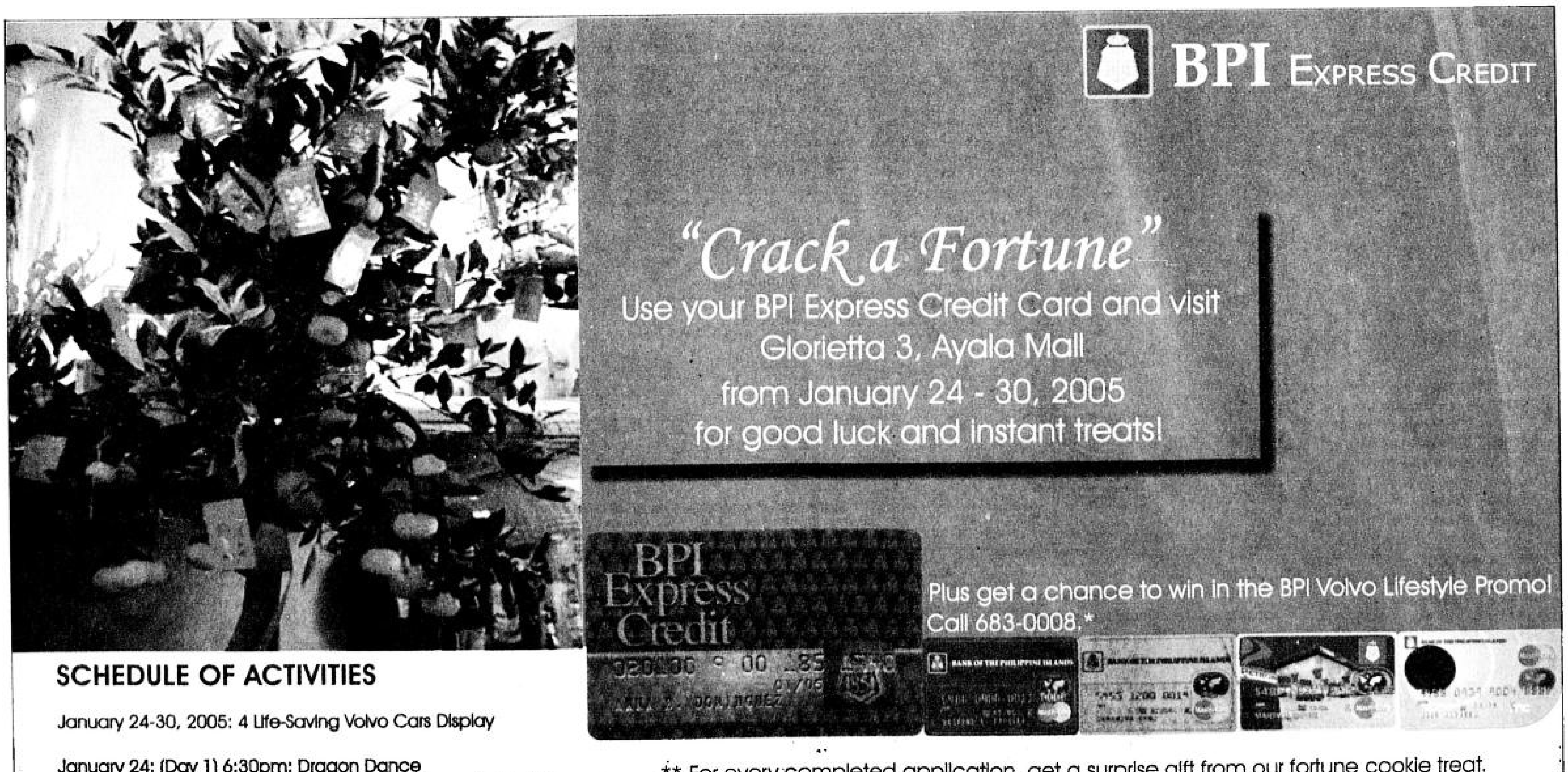
DINING OUT

INTERCONTINENTAL Manila's Prince Albert Rotisserie offers a special seafood menu until Jan. 29. Featured are Tuna or Salmon Tartar, Mussels cooked in Cream with Garlic and Parsley and Alimasag Bisque, Sea Scallop sauteed with Butter and Tomatoes, Roasted Salmon served with Red Wine Sauce with sauteed Baby Potatoes and Bacon, Flounder Fillet Meuniere-style served with Steamed Potatoes scented with Mint Leaves and Seabass studded with Anchovy and Black Olives served on Eggplant Caviar with Sea Urchin Sauce. Call 8159711.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Patisserie presents "Very Strawberry" until Jan 30. Choose from Delicious Berries powdered with sugar, Strawberry Meringue, Pastry with Pommery Berries, Thin Pancake with Strawberry filling on Champagne Sabayon and Fresh Champagne Strawberries scented with Green Pepper Corn. The hotel also offers Strawberry Daiquiri until Feb. 28. Call 5261212 local 2326.

HOLIDAY INN Galleria Manila features "A Taste of China" Feb. 2-11 at Raphael Cafe-Restaurant. Savor Roasted Peking Duck, Braised E-fu Noodles with Chicken Strips, Deep-fried Garoupa with Pine Seeds in Sweet and Sour Sauce and Szechuan Vegetable Salad. Call 6337111.

SEGAFREDO Espresso Bar offers Margherita with Mozzarella and Oregano, Napoletana with Mozzarella and Anchovies, Alle Melanze with Mozzarella, Eggplants, Garlic, Capers and Oregano, Al Tonno with Mozzarella, Tuna, Roasted Garlic, Chili Peppers and Capers, Capricciosa with Mozzarella, Prosciuto Crudo and Hard-boiled Eggs, Ai Formaggi with Mozzarella, Parmesan, Provolone and Gorgonzola, Quattro Stagioni with Mozzarella, Salami, Artichoke, Mushrooms and Hard-Boiled Eggs and Pizza Salmone with Smoked Salmon Strips over Tomato and Cheese Sauce. Segafredo Espresso Bar is located at Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati and at the G/F Liberty Plaza along Valero St. cor. H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati. Call 7574058/ 8453610.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Assistant Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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One night only with 'The Voice'

PERFECT COMBINATION. Watson has angelic voice and suave looks

FOR MUSIC lovers, it's never too early to begin the countdown for the one-night-only concert of British opera superstar Russell Watson on Feb. 10 at the PICC Plenary Hall.

Watson is the fascinating 30-year-old British tenor who has created a buzz in the global music scene with his angelic and powerful voice, not to mention his suave, good looks.

Watson's very first album, "The Voice," reached the No. 1 spot simultaneously in the United Kingdom and the United States classical charts. His career continued to soar with follow-up double platinum albums and prestigious performances around the world.

Manila's historic PICC will host the most sought-after Watson in a live performance.

Aside from the chance to hear and see Watson, the Manila audience will also be privileged to witness the famous British conductor Sir William Hayward at work as he conducts the 60-piece San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and the 40-member San Miguel Master Chorale.

In Europe, Hayward is a respected composer, conductor, arranger and concert organist. As Watson's voice coach, he had a major and significant role in the amazing career of the opera superstar. The two men have worked together in producing the most memorable classical pieces, with Hayward acting as orchestra conductor on Watson's albums "The Voice," "Encore" and "Reprise," which all turned double-platinum.

Hayward is the musical director, conductor, arranger and pianist in Watson's sold-out performances. He conducted the Royal Philharmonic and Royal Scottish National Orchestras as well as many fine choirs, including the Huddersfield Choral Society, during Watson's UK tours in 2002 and 2003 and his jampacked

ONE/2

Cold hearts to melt, thanks to The Vamp, The Engineer

By Ruth L. Navarra

SUNDAY LOVIN.' There will be no heartbreak songs, and Vernie and Leo will do it on a Sunday

A WARNING to those who want to avoid the "love" virus: Stay away from this sleek Valentine presentation starring two world-class singers.

On Feb. 13, Verni Varga and Leo Valdez are set to thaw some cold, cold hearts at the Makati Shangri-La in a dinner show titled "The Vamp and the Engineer," a reference to stage personas that have become their professional signatures.

SHOW STOPPER

"I've chosen songs for the show that are hopeful and encouraging," Verni said during a press conference. "I want to concentrate on positive love." There will be no songs about heartbreak, she said, at least not for her.

"We decided to have the show on a Sunday," Leo added, "so people would not have to rush from work, so they [would have time to] dress up." Verni agreed: "Monday didn't seem to be the right day to have fun."

The two have been friends for years. "Best friends," Verni stressed. "*Barkada talaga*."

Let alone close friendship, mutual admiration was very evident between the two, specially when then claimed they were excited upon learning of their forthcoming collaboration.

"Verni smolders," Leo said, describing his friend's sex appeal.

They held each other's hands as they answered questions. For instance, why had they waited all these years to do a show together?

It was a question of "timing," Leo said. He probably meant it was virtually impossible until now, since for the past eight years he had been traipsing all over Europe playing the part of The Engineer in the Broadway musical "Miss Saigon." He is currently on leave.

"But I've been wanting to perform with Verni for so long," Leo said, "because she really is one of the best." Verni, flustered, patted him on the arm and said, "Aww, I love you *talaga*."

Performing with someone is like finding

COLD/2

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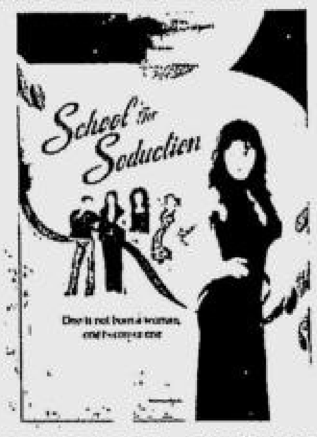

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"Ang sarap-sarap magbasketbol..." Like their previous hits "Bulaklak" and "Kikay," the new single of the Viva Hotbabes, "Basketbol," is taking local music by storm. Tonight at 9 p.m. at the Metro Concert Bar, get ready to play "basketbol" with the Viva Hotbabes as they launch their latest album from Viva Records. Tickets for P300 each will be available at the gate, but lucky Smart and Talk 'N Text subscribers can get in for free as 50 free tickets will be given away. Just text HOTBABES to 286, and you could be on your way to this one-of-a-kind, fun party. Metro Concert Bar is on West Avenue in Quezon City.

SPIN MASTER. DJ Manolet Dario in action

DJ Manolet in Padi's Hard House Party

PUT YOUR feet on the dance floor, feel the rhythm of hard house music, and witness the amazing laser lights show as Padi's Point presents DJ Manolet Dario in the launch of the Hard House Party at Padi's Point Araneta on Saturday, Jan. 29.

DJ Manolet is without a doubt the most popular DJ in the country today.

He earned his popularity by playing for more than 20 years now. He started in 1979 and has not stopped since.

The Hard House Party will be touring all Padi's Point branches.

For more details, call 725-6032 or 725-5021 or visit www.padispoint.com.

The event is presented by Padi's Point in cooperation with British American Tobacco.

Cold hearts to melt, thanks ...

From page 1

your soul mate, Verni said. "We really had a connection." To which Leo added, "We understand each other even without words."

Even as they picked the 18 songs for the repertoire, Verni said, not a single argument arose. Leo attributed this to mutual respect: "I told her my intention was to complement her voice. She said to me, *'Ikaw pa.'* I think that's where we're coming from: knowing what the other can do."

"Nobody Does It Better," "I Finally Found Someone" and other familiar love songs have been meticulously rearranged to fit the two performers' personalities. But, they said, if the audience clamors for The Vamp's famous "Take Five," or for The Engineer's show-stopping "American Dream," they might accommodate the request.

They will start rehearsing two weeks before the performance date. "Never underestimate the local audience," Verni said. "Filipinos have very good taste, and can get very critical."

(Dinner is at 7 p.m., show starts at 9. Tickets are P5,000 and P3,500.)

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One night only...

From page 1

concerts at the Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House.

Hayward also supports Watson's guest conductors and oversees all the musical arrangements in his concerts.

For his Manila concert, Watson will sing standard classics as well as ballads from his albums, such as "Nessun Dorma," "Caruso," "Granada," "Santa Lucia" and "The Prayer" (a duet with Ima Castro), among others.

Russel Watson's Manila concert is presented by Smart Infinity "Enjoy life's best" Rado of Switzerland in cooperation with Philippine Tatler, The Metropolitan, San Miguel Corp. and 92.3 Joey. It is also brought to you by Smart Gold, Montre Watch Shop "Your life, your time, your style," NBC, San Mig Café, Magnolia Gold Label Ice Cream, Magnolia Gold Butter, Purefoods Honeycured Bacon and McDonald's.

Official residence is Discovery Suites while official car is Jaguar.

Part of the proceeds of the concert will go to the Philippine National Red Cross for the benefit of the typhoon victims in Infanta, Quezon.

For inquiries, call Ticketworld, 891-9999.

Mon David keeps the jazz torch burning

HE'S AN acclaimed jazz singer, songwriter, record producer and musician, but Mon David feels more honored to have been instrumental in rekindling public interest in Kapampangan music with the release of his "Abe Mu Ku" album last March.

The compilation of Kapampangan love songs, folk tunes and original compositions eventually became a favorite among *kabalen* and *balikbayan* yearning to hear new recordings in their native dialect. Because of his efforts, Mon was honored by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Pampanga (SPP) as Most Outstanding Kapampangan in Arts, Culture & Music. The SPP recently passed resolutions to further boost the cultural renaissance sweeping the region by requesting all AM and FM radio stations, malls, theaters and other venues to play at least one Original Kapampangan Music (OKM) piece every day.

As part of his ongoing crusade, Mon sees to it that he performs in his hometown at least once a month.

"It's inspiring to know that a lot of our countrymen are very eager to rediscover and preserve their musical roots and make the songs accessible to the younger generations," Mon says.

The resolutions were proposed by the Center for Kapampangan Studies and sponsored by Board Member Nestor Tolentino.

Mon recently completed the rough mix of the CD "Lifetime," due for mid-year release. The album has 13 original compositions, with two tracks—"Lifetime" and "I Had a Dream"—written by Gary Granada. For the CD, the veteran studio drummer assembled a virtual who's who of the best studio and jazz instrumentalists, such as Tots Tolentino, Cezar Aguas, Noel Mendez, Elhmir Saison, Mark Lopez, Joey Quirino, Bond Samson, Meong Pacana, Dix Lucero, Koko Bermejo and Colby de la Calzada.

On two Saturdays, Jan. 29 and Feb. 26, Mon will perform at Monk's Dream, inside Wasabi restaurant along Makati Avenue, beside the Manila Peninsula Hotel.

He will be backed by Colby on bass, Edgar Avenir on guitar, Koko on drums and Mark on keyboards.

"It's nice to be able to indulge once in a while," says Mon. "This time I'm rekindling my passion for jazz, another endangered art form that needs that vital spark to survive."

After rediscovering his roots, Mon could very well be on his way to his next musical crusade, this time to keep the jazz torch burning.

CRUSADER. Mon rekindled interest in Kapampangan songs.

Women...

From page 4

moment.

He seemed fine when they last spoke, a phone call about three weeks ago, McMahon said. "I thought they were treating the emphysema problem with medication. It was a total shock and surprise to me," he said.

Emphysema, a respiratory disease, has been linked to smoking. Carson, who had heart bypass surgery in 1999, was a heavy smoker during his "Tonight" days, wielding a cigarette as a prop on air until smoking on TV passed out of favor. *AP*

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4 BLADE TRINITY

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2 MEET THE FOCKERS
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4 BLADE TRINITY

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WOMEN/3

CARSON

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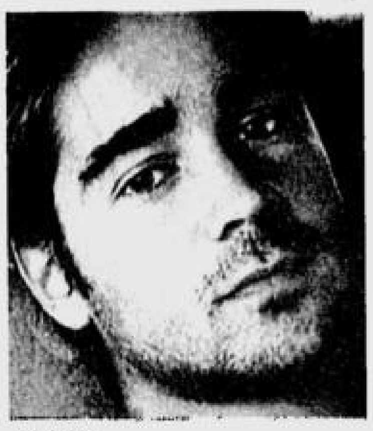
BUSH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SHOW STOPPER

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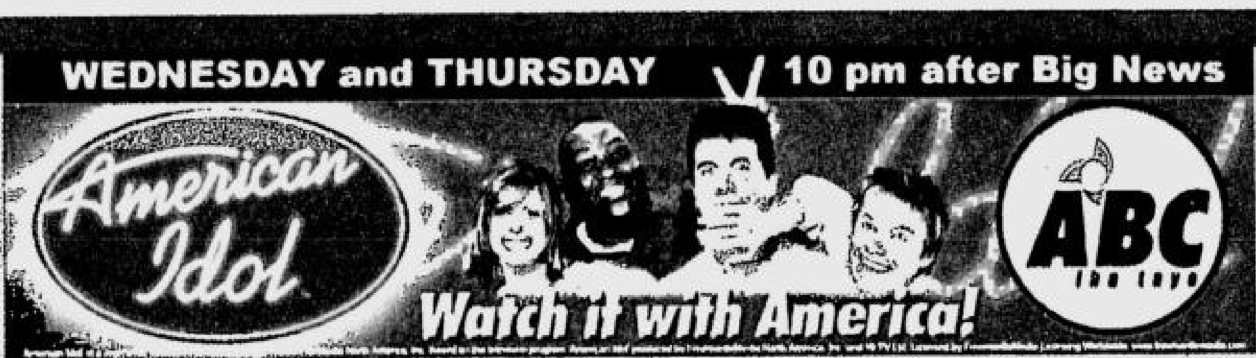
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Thursday, January 27, 2005


WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY 10 pm after Big News

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romansa	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider	Dong Puno
NBN		Taiwan/ Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision	Next Stop			Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Mosconi Cup 2004					
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA					Sentro	PBA					Big News	Inq TV		Fearless Fighting	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Retro TV		V League				Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	SWI Great Bodies 04	
Solar		WWE Smackdown				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Marsteel	Dungeons And Dragons	Babylon V		Thunder Box		JAG		The Limey			
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix		100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd				Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	What I Like About You	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	JKX	Ed		Girls Behaving Badly	Simple Life 2	Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Cinema One		Ikaw Lang				Sana Dalawa Ang Puso Ko				Friends & Lovers				Lastikman				Booba	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	UAAP				X-Men Evolution	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup		Barkada Nights				News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN		The Glass House				The Amazing Race		Samurai X	Samurai X	Beastmaster		Now See This	Now See This	Record Setters		Mary Reilly			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Sting: Inside The Songs Of Sacred Love		The Chronicle: News From The Edge		My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance		Friends	Sting: Inside The Songs Of Sacred Love
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News		World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Innovation		Frontiers Of Construction		Riddles Of The Dead		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Innovation		Frontiers Of Construction	
Solar Sports		ATP Stockholm Open '04 SF1			Sounds of the Finals	Danish Open '04 Final MxdDMS					KOTV Classics		NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Denver @ Detroit					NBA Action
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Good Finds	Clean House		Breathing Room	Genuine Article	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
HBO			The Net				That Championship Season				D-Tox (7:25 PM)			Extreme Measures				Star Trek Nemesis (10:55PM)	
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Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			The Man Who Knew Too Much (3:45 PM)				Sugartime (5:45 PM)				High School High			John Carpenter Presents Vampires: Los Muertos			Scent Of A Woman (10:35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Killer Instinct: From The Files Of Agent Candice Delong				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Agency II		Strong Medicine		Cavedweller			Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye (10:35PM)		Agency II (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Monster Garage		Ultimate Cars	Building The Ultimate	Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Power Zone	
MTV Philippines		MTV Asia Hitlist		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	Mofo	MTV U-Break	MTV Jams	Non-Stop Hits	TRL		Globally Dismissed	Pimp My Ride	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus	Porsche md 7&8	Watson's Champions Chall Day3							Davis Cup '04 Highlights			Raceworld		Nopi Tunerversion	Bikini Destination	Inside the PGA	Bob Hope Chrysler Classic First Round		
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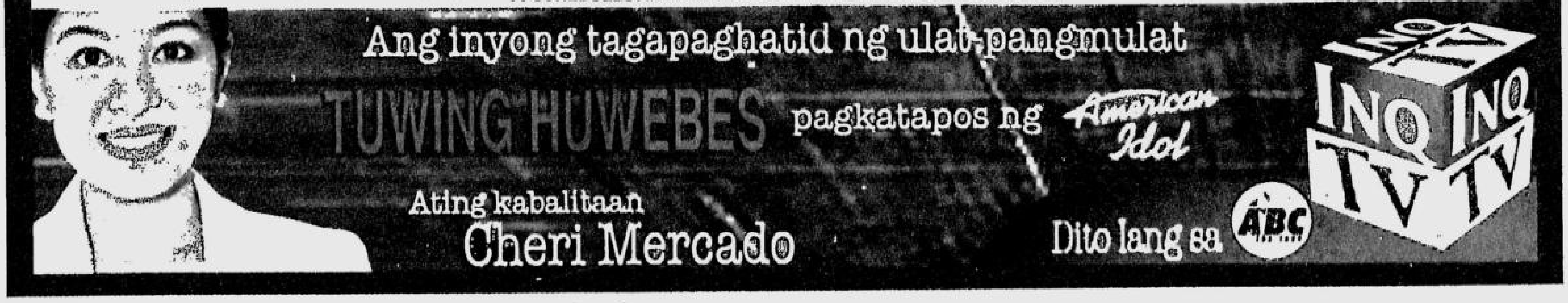
Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
TUWING HUWEBES pagkatapos ng American Idol
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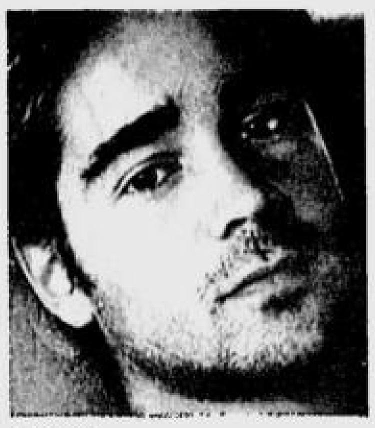
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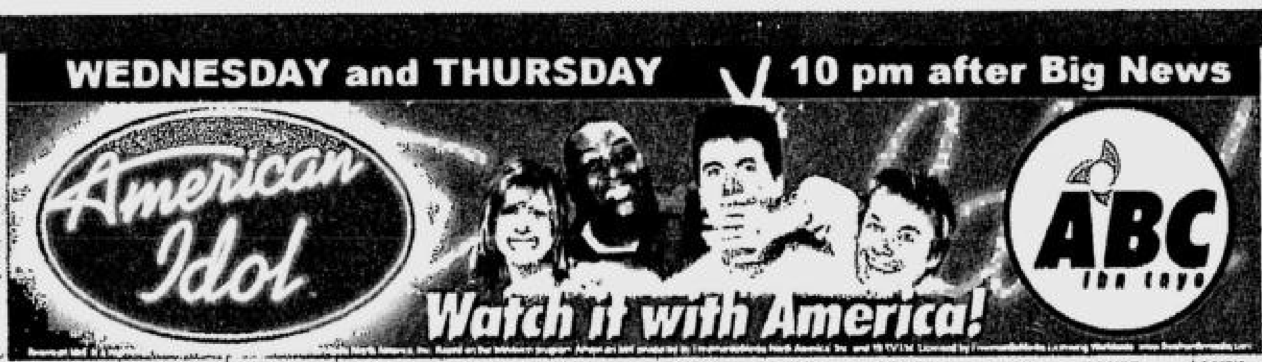

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CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News		World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Innovation		Frontlines Of Construction		Riddles Of The Dead		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Innovation		Frontlines Of Construction	
Solar Sports		ATP Stockholm Open '04 SF1			Sounds of the Finals	Danish Open '04 Final MxdD/MS					KOTV Classics		NBA TV Daily	NBA Game: Denver @ Detroit					NBA Action
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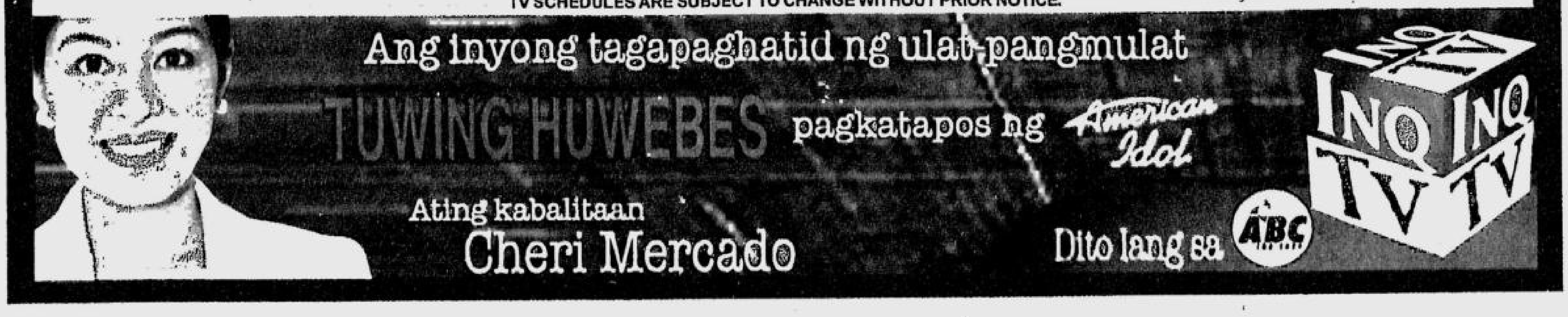
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Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV